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The Martlet Seal.

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THE MARTLET SEAL.

BY

JEANETTE H. WALWORTH,

AUTHOR OF "BAR SINISTER," "THE NEW MAN AT ROSSMERE," "OLD FULKERSON'S CLERK," ETC.

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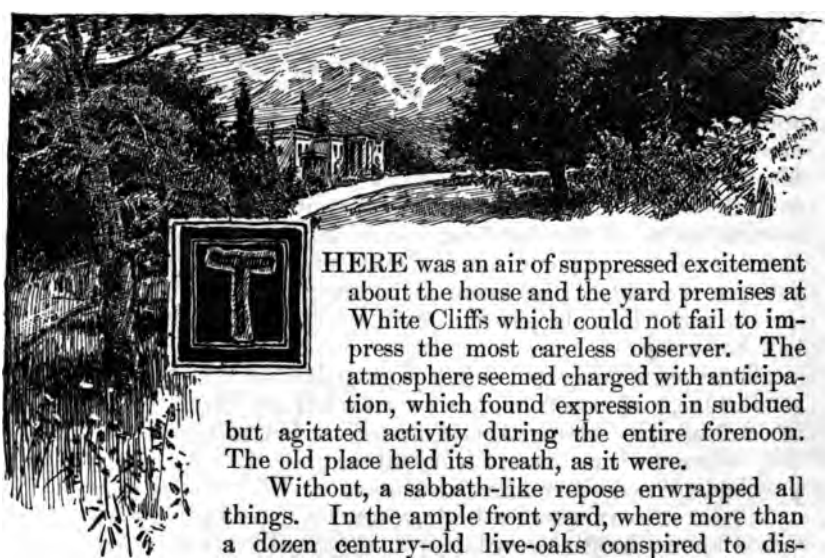
THE MARTLET SEAL.

CHAPTER I.



THERE was an air of suppressed excitement about the house and the yard premises at White Cliffs which could not fail to impress the most careless observer. The atmosphere seemed charged with anticipation, which found expression in subdued but agitated activity during the entire forenoon. The old place held its breath, as it were.

Without, a sabbath-like repose enwrapped all things. In the ample front yard, where more than a dozen century-old live-oaks conspired to discourage the growth of the grass, leafy shadows were reflected from a freshly-scarified surface of hard brown earth. The White Cliffs carriage-drive made a very grand sweep from the big entrance-gate, around the outer circle of the old live-oaks, up to the low stuccoed front steps, on either side of which thick beds of purple and white violets cushioned the brown earth and were even then sweetening the chill November air.

In one of the large square rooms which looked out upon the flower-garden at the side of the house, the entire family of White Cliffs, with

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two exceptions, was assembled. Those present consisted of the mistress of White Cliffs and three of her sons.

"The Lorimer boys," with one exception, were great, broad-shouldered, long-legged, stalwart young men, with square determined jaws and fine eyes. Their height and their square jaws were maternal contributions. Their good looks and indomitable love of roving came from the Lorimer side.

People said there must be a troubadour or two in some of the branches of the Lorimer tree. The boys were always falling into sentimental scrapes of one sort and another. And certain it was, nothing irked them more than sitting decorously around the house "like so many tabby-cats," as Rafe contemptuously described it.

They looked absurdly ill at ease this quiet afternoon, grouped idly about the open fireplace, with nothing more active on hand than watching their mother's fast-flying knitting-needles.

They would have felt infinitely more comfortable with their guns upon their shoulders, their trousers securely tucked inside their top-boots, their dogs at their heels, and murder in their hearts. But the spell of the unusual was upon them too. The guns were all stacked in one corner of the green-tinted hall, the dogs were in exile, and, with their three pairs of restless feet encased in faultlessly-polished foot-gear, the Lorimer boys sat decorously about the home hearth, patient and bored.

The mistress of White Cliffs was dressed in her best black bombazine, over which she had thriftily drawn a crisp white muslin apron. She was knitting. Divine Providence had laid the inexorable necessity upon Mrs. Lorimer of always keeping her hands occupied. She always was knitting if she was not doing something else. Apart from the swift-flying fingers, she was absolutely motionless. The restlessness which on the boys' part found expression in the shuffling of feet, unrepressed yawns, or an occasional expletive indicative of wearied patience, was only to be surmised in her case by the unnecessary frequency with which she jerked a fresh supply of wool from the big gray ball in her lap.

Her eyes, not big and soft and gray like the "Lorimer eyes," but small, blue, and penetrating, never once left the dancing flames of the wood fire. Her strong, square, masculine jaw twitched occasionally; but, whatever her source of inward disquiet, it found no other expression. She sat there the embodiment of self-contained strength.

The neighbors were fond of saying that "the Lorimer boys never would know what they owed their mother." That they were fully conscious of her worth, and that they still stood in considerable awe of her, great burly fellows that they were, was beyond question; but their awe was mixed with the tenderest reverence.

Suddenly a shuffling of hurried bare feet; then the big mahogany door was opened without the ceremony of a knock, to admit a round woolly head and a small eager voice:

"I see her smoke for true, this time, Mister Dick."

There was a common uprising among the men. The mistress of White Cliffs alone sat still. Whatever *it* was they were all waiting

for, it must come to her, not she to it. She would not even meet it half-way. Her needles fairly flew, and she gave an audible gasp as the boys disappeared into the hall. She knew they had gone to the veranda for the twentieth time, at least, to look towards the river through the vista cut in the woods about White Cliffs in order to give its inmates a view of up-coming steamers.

They all came trooping back presently, bringing various reports:

"Up above Duncan's," said Lorimer, resuming his chair, and laying one long brown hand along the arm of his mother's rocker. It was as if he administered comfort thereby.

"Just turning the bend," said Dick.

"Moving like a snail," said Raphael, commonly known as "Rafe."

"It will be an hour before she gets here yet, then," said Mrs. Lorimer, dropping stitches in the most reckless manner, and for the first time in her life, perhaps, failing to detect and promptly rectify wrong-doing.

"Just about."

Dick replaced his soft felt hat on his knee-cap and looked about the familiar room in a new spirit of criticism. It was a severely clean room, but rather depressing in its heavy splendor. Dick frowned at it all. It looked unwelcoming.

"A few flowers wouldn't disagree with those big vases," he ventured, looking away from his mother towards the mantel ornaments above her head. "To my certain knowledge, those Pampas plumes have been there six months. Things look sort of dun-colored, don't they, mother?"

At this direct question, Mrs. Lorimer's eyes travelled slowly from the dingy mantel ornaments to Dick's dissatisfied face:

"There are no flowers in the garden,—none in bloom, that is. Moreover, I don't believe in assumption of any sort. She is not coming here for a visit. She is coming to stay. She may as well see us at first as she is to see us for all time."

"Then we had better whistle in the dogs and get out of these white shirts," said Lorimer, with a disarming laugh. Lorrie was the only one of the tribe who ever ventured to comment on their mother's dicta or to turn her into gentle ridicule. But she was not to be jested with to-day, even by her first-born:

"Don't be disrespectful, Lorimer. It was not by my orders that you banished the dogs. Raphael seemed to think they might shock Mrs. John Lorimer's city nerves. I consider that what is good enough for me should be good enough for John's wife."

Dick Lorimer had a habit of pertinaciously sticking to his text: "Unquestionably, mummer; and what made me think about flowers was remembering how you told us about the fine doings and the gorgeous decorations when father brought you here a bride."

The faintest possible flush mounted into Mrs. Lorimer's sallow cheeks; her eyes flashed, and her square jaw became, if possible, still more square:

"That was different. Times were different. Everything was different. It was my sisters who did it. John has no sisters. Moreover,

your father never took me anywhere as a bride. I brought him here. White Cliffs was my father's wedding gift to me. And—and——" she turned her eyes wistfully upon Lorimer's handsome face, "while I meant to do the right thing by all of you, boys, I wanted Lorimer's wife to be the one to take the reins when I am gone."

Lorimer put out a soothing hand. It stayed the fast-flying knitting-needles for a brief while.

"SHE MAY AS WELL SEE US AT FIRST AS SHE IS TO SEE US FOR ALL TIME."

"White Cliffs will need no new mistress for long years to come yet, mother. You are worth any two of us to-day."

"Say a dozen of us," said Dick, liberally. "But to return. Don't you think, all of you, that a few camellias would set the old room off handsomely?"

"There's bushels of them in bloom over at Glenburnie." This from Rafe.

"Glenburnie!"

Lorimer turned a warning glance upon Rafe. Mrs. Lorimer slowly repeated the word in a thick voice:

"Glenburnie!"

She had folded her trembling hands in her lap and turned wondering eyes on the daring suggester of this plan for beautifying the White Cliffs sitting-room.

Rafe stood his ground with outward composure:

"Yes'm, at Glenburnie. I rode past there yesterday, and the japonica bushes were loaded down with blossoms."

"They sell the flowers," said Richard, combatively, "and we are as free to buy them as anybody."

"She *sells* the *flowers!*" Scorn, surprise, and disgust struggled for the mastery in Mrs. Lorimer's voice.

"Yes, ma'am. Why not?"

The frown on the mistress's forehead deepened. Lorimer looked beseechingly at the boys. Did they not know as well as he did how hard their mother had struggled for the stoicism she would need for this coming ordeal? And was it not a pity to have it shattered by dragging Glenburnie into such unnecessary prominence? There was an ominous silence.

Dick got up, and, after moving aimlessly about the room for a second, muttered something about "reporting progress," and made his escape. Rafe, going over to the window that gave him the best view of the White Cliffs flower-garden, tried to whistle down his discomfort, but only succeeded in increasing his consciousness of it, until inspired to say, "I see a few lantanas and one chrysanthemum out yonder. I'll pull them, and put them in a tumbler in her room." Then he, too, disappeared. Mrs. Lorimer's trembling voice broke the silence after a while:

"And they knew that I would sooner see White Cliffs draped in crape from garret to cellar than made gay with a flower that grew at Glenburnie."

"Is not that putting it rather strong, mother?" said Lorimer, stooping to recover the ball of worsted which had fallen from her lap. He kneeled to replace it in the tremulous hand she stretched out for it. There was something very pitiful to the strong man in that repressed agitation. He pressed his lips to his mother's withered white palm with caressing tenderness.

She rewarded the knightly gesture with a wintry smile, as she passed her disengaged hand over his ruddy cheek in a fleeting caress. But the dark mood was not to be so easily dispelled. The frown came back as she said, in an uncompromising voice,—

"I cannot put it too strong, Lorimer. It is impossible. You boys only guess at a few things. I meant when the last one of you came of age to have told you all about it. I was waiting for Dennis to be twenty-one. Then I meant to parcel up the land between you all, and to tell you the truth about Glenburnie."

"Dennis was twenty-one two years ago, mother. But—" hastily, as she raised imploring eyes to him—"don't let us talk about unpleasant things to-night."

"Thank you, dear." It was said almost timidly. Then she added, "Be patient a little while longer, my dear."

Lorimer looked away from his mother's disturbed face to the branches of the rose-tree that grew close enough to the dining-room window for its roses to be plucked, when there were any in bloom. He was consciously suffering a great wrong. But how was a man to go about righting a wrong put upon him by a woman, and that woman his mother?

"Lorrie, where is Duke?" Mrs. Lorimer asked, abruptly.

"Out there with the rest of the dogs, I suppose."

"I think I would rather have him in here. He is getting old, you know."

Duke was Dennis's favorite setter, and Dennis was among the miss-

ing members of the White Cliffs circle. As Lorimer opened the door to admit Duke, the sound of wheels crunching the gravel on the drive, quite close at hand, met his ears. An eager light came into his eyes. He seized his hat and hurried towards the spot where Dick and Rafe were already stationed.

The mistress of White Cliffs laid her ball of gray wool, all bristling with shining needles, aside with slow deliberation. Her face was ghastly in its pallor. She stood up in her place, but made no forward motion. They must come to her. A fretful outcry, as of a sleepy child wakened against its will, smote on her ears. She started at the sound. Had John, so young, so inexperienced, mated with a widow? Could he have made such a fool of himself? The door was standing wide open. It sounded to her as if fifty pairs of feet were shuffling about on the resonant marble pavement. A foreign voice rebuked the fretting child. The boys, her boys, John among them, were all laughing and talking at once. They had forgotten her. She had been standing there "hours." She was already dethroned,—a lonely, old, superfluous woman. No, they were coming to her. She leaned heavily against the tall back of her chair, then started as if from sleep. John's wife was holding up a sweet tired face to be kissed.

CHAPTER II.

AMONG the ancestral belongings of White Cliffs was a tall corner clock of solid mahogany. It was a trustworthy timepiece, in spite of antiquity and long service. When this majestic heirloom struck nine, with the deliberation becoming to its age and dignity, Mrs. Lorimer, senior, made a final disposition of her wool and needles by dropping them into the gay calico bag which swung from one arm of her easy-chair, and addressed the family circle impersonally:

"I think I will conduct my son's wife to her room. She must be fatigued after her journey."

The eagerness with which this suggestion was approved might have been construed rather unflatteringly by Mrs. John, had not she herself been most eager to act upon it. It had been an extremely difficult evening for them all, and no one was sorry to terminate it at so early an hour.

The men drew into a narrower circle about the broad fireplace, as the two women disappeared through the door held politely open for them by Lorimer.

Rafe extended the tobacco-canister hospitably towards John. Four pipes were simultaneously exhumed from four pockets. Dick, eager and young, voiced the common desire:

"Now, then, old fellow, let us hear all about it. You see, your letters were tremendously scrappy and unsatisfactory."

"Tremendously so."

Lorimer had come back to the fireplace and appropriated the easy-chair, on whose arm swung the gay bag. He was studying John's face intently: "Wrote us by one mail that you had serious intentions concerning a young lady in your boarding-house, and the next information we get is that you are going to bring your wife home to live; will be up at once."

John fidgeted uncomfortably in his chair. That steadfast gaze of Lorrie's was more than he could stand:

"Not to live, but to stay for six months or so. I had given up my place. And Nora wanted to leave town for a while."

"And never to tell us that she was a widow! A confoundedly handsome one, Johnnie, no question of that."

The new-made groom flushed hotly. Lorimer made haste to say,—

"Dick and Rafe were seeing to the luggage when you introduced the little lady as Mrs. John's niece."

John addressed himself directly to his younger brothers:

"My wife was not a widow. The child is her niece. That is all I am at liberty to tell you just now, except that she was as much of a surprise to me as to any of you. I did not know of her existence until after the ceremony was performed. I hope mother will not take a dislike to her. She won't be any more in the way, in this big house, than a stray kitten."

Dick laughed: "You've hit upon an unfortunate comparison. Stray kittens are mother's special detestation. But I guess between us all we'll contrive to keep this one from being ostracized."

He wanted to comfort John. They all did, in fact. The bond of brotherly affection was very strong among the Lorimer boys. John's face was not that of a happy groom. It wore an unfamiliar look of anxiety,—somewhat as if, having consciously wandered very near the edge of a precipice, he was calculating the chances of plunging over. Lorimer turned his eyes from John's flushed face to the dusty Pampas plumes which Dick had criticised so severely. He smiled at the undue importance the boy had given them. The mantel vases might have been ornamented with sides of bacon for all the notice they had excited. Everybody had been stiff, unnatural, uncomfortable.

"Your wife is a beautiful woman, John," Lorimer said, soothingly.

John answered almost combatively: "Yes, Nora is handsome. And she is a sweet, good woman. A better one does not live."

"Any family?"

"Yes—no. That is, nobody but Ninette and Ninette's mother."

"Ninette's mother is alive, then?"

"No—yes. Devil take it, boys, I never was in such a snarl before. What between supreme dislike to appear so mysterious here among you all at home, and my desire to respect Nora's wishes, I am acting like an imbecile. I don't know what to say or to leave unsaid."

"Be loyal to her, John. Never mind about us."

John turned a grateful look in Lorimer's direction: "Thank y[ou], Lorrie. You are right. It is easy enough not to mind about [the] fellows; but how about mother?"

Lorimer shrugged his broad shoulders and looked powerless. Dick grunted dubiously. Rafe laughed nervously. The harassed look came back into John's face: evidently none of them were prepared to help him over that difficulty. Lorimer offered some advice:

"It is well to leave some things to chance and to Providence. The boys and I will gratefully accept any crumbs of information you choose to fling us, but where mother is concerned, I would advise you to confide in her as far as possible." His mellow voice rose irritably: "You were ridiculously young to think about marrying at all, Johnnie. Only twenty-five last month."

"I have been in love with Nora for two years. She boarded at the same house with me. She supported herself as a stenographer and type-writer. Good old family, but everything gone. Old story. Ruined by the war. She refused me three separate times. Then all of a sudden she asked me one day if I was of the same mind. When I told her I was, she said she would marry me that day two weeks. And she did. That is all there is to tell you, boys. And if she fails to win mother's heart, it will be the first failure for her to record in that line. Everybody grows fond of Nora. Oh, I say, haven't you anything to tell me about Dennis? Been seen? Been heard from?"

"Neither seen nor heard from."

"And Ida Fairbanks?"

"Things are about as usual over there, I suppose," Lorimer was spokesman,—"she wearing her life away uncomplainingly for a selfish old sybarite whose luxuries are supplied out of her earnings."

"Earnings!"

"Brown bread and flower peddler."

"Ida Fairbanks?"

"Ida Fairbanks."

"Great heavens! She is a fool."

"I fancy that the majority of women are when it comes to a question of putting their own comfort before that of some man brute who has a natural or an acquired claim upon them."

Lorrie's sage conclusion seemed to set them all a-thinking. Silence fell on the little group. John sighed heavily. His pipe lay along the arm of his chair quite dead. As he leaned over to knock the gray ashes out against the tall brass fire-dogs, he was wondering how "poor little Nora" was "making it" with his austere mother. He was painfully alive to the possibility of his bridal chamber being turned into a chamber of the Inquisition that evening.

But there was no Inquisition in progress up-stairs. The mistress of White Cliffs was somewhat frigidly, but with entire courtesy, making her daughter-in-law at home among her strange surroundings.

There were peculiarities about the lock on the big bureau drawers to be explained; the location of the linen-closet, where an inexhaustible supply of fresh towels was always to be found, to be indicated; the meaning of the various bells which would ring in the morning was to be made clear. Then she must examine with her own hands, to see if enough covering had been put on the bed. Nothing was ever left to chance by the mistress of White Cliffs.

But all the while she was moving about in that slow and stately fashion of hers, giving her domestic information in a soft, even voice, she was inwardly pondering some strange words that had fallen from the French *bonne*'s lips just as she, Mrs. Lorimer, followed by John's wife, had entered the room.

From the small adjoining bedroom which had hastily been prepared for the unexpected Ninette came the woman's angry voice. The door was open. They could see the child lying asleep, one dimpled hand supporting her round pink cheek, and they could see the Frenchwoman putting things to order:

"Little fiend! She has quite worn me out. Any one could tell that she was the offspring of a devil and a light woman. And now she sleeps like an infant saint!"

Evidently the *bonne* had had her difficult evening too.

"How angry her voice sounds!" Mrs. John peered anxiously into the room where Ninette was sleeping. "I hope she is not vicious. I had so little time for selection."

"You do not speak or understand French?"

"Not a syllable. I wish I did, for Ninette's sake."

Mrs. Lorimer had been accounted a fair French scholar in her school-days. She was glad now that the rusty acquirement had stood her in such good stead.

"Mr. Lorimer did not write you about Ninette, I imagine," Nora said, somewhat nervously, the tour of the room being made and her mother-in-law coming to a stand-still on the hearth-rug.

"No. My son was singularly uncommunicative."

"Yes; of course. There was no time, you know. Everything was so sudden. And—about Ninette he knew nothing at all until after the ceremony."

"Did not know what?"

"Did not know that she was to be with us. I did not know it myself."

"Strange. Exceedingly strange. To whom does the child belong?"

John's wife looked away from the stern face so close to hers, before answering, slowly,—

"To me—now. I am all she has in the world. She is the daughter of my only sister."

"And your sister is——"

"Gone."

The answer came after a strangely deliberate pause. Either John's wife was growing more and more confused, or else she was congealing under the frigid conditions of the moment. John's mother was becoming positively magisterial.

"And the father of the child?"

"We never speak of him."

"Humph! I suppose she has a name?"

"Ninette."

"But a surname. One might call a poodle, a pet lamb, or a stray kitten, Ninette."

"It is sufficient for my pet lamb," said John's wife, softly. Then

the small young woman, perhaps tired of being badgered, looked the large old woman almost defiantly in the face.

"Mother-in-law, please don't take a dislike to my poor little Ninette. She is such a tiny body, eats so little, and occupies so very little space. One could easily lose her in this grand old house. I shall make Céleste keep her out of your way as much as possible."

It was unwisely said. Mrs. Lorimer felt herself ignobly misconstrued. That does not tend to improve a woman's temper. She abhorred mystery. And here was John's wife tainting the pure air of White Cliffs with it, at her very first appearance. She turned away with a dark frown. Nora pushed her hair behind her small ears with a tired gesture. Her lids were hot with the tears she would not shed in presence of that stern old woman. The mistress moved slowly towards the door. Suddenly Nora stood between her and it. She had a wistful sort of face and a voice of infinite sweetness:

"WILL YOU NOT CALL ME DAUGHTER ONCE BEFORE YOU GO?"

"Will you not call me daughter once before you go? It will be robbing no one. And will you not say, 'God bless John's wife,' just once?"

The rigid lines about the elder woman's mouth relaxed. She raised her right hand with an uncertain motion. Suddenly it fell by her side like a thing of lead, and she turned away with a curt "good-night."

Not yet. Not yet. Céleste's words came back to her and banished the asked-for blessing from her lips:

"Any one could tell that she was the offspring of a devil and a light woman."

Neither bane nor blessing ever fell lightly from the lips of the mistress of White Cliffs.

CHAPTER III.

A MAN as much in love with his wife as John Lorimer was with the woman he had taken "on faith" was not likely to fan every spark of suspicion into a living coal of mistrust. He would have much liked to be able to explain Ninette more clearly to his mother and the boys, but, as he could not, loyalty to Nora demanded his acceptance of that small cloud on his horizon unquestioningly.

It was during the course of one of their pleasant morning drives, while he sat with his long legs partially extended over the side of the village cart, in order to leave Ninette and her stool ample accommodations, that Nora set him to pondering perplexedly.

He had been making her acquainted with the exterior of all the country-houses within an area of ten miles about White Cliffs. He had been vastly entertaining, and she correspondingly entertained.

"You see, Mrs. John, after this week I will be in harness. I am going to help Lorrie at the gin."

"Of course, of course. I expect I shall have to invent some sort of harness too. I fancy mother Lorimer does not tolerate drones graciously. But, John dear, tell me something about that place." She pointed the ferrule of her lace-trimmed parasol towards the gable of a house just discernible through a thick grove of ancient trees supplemented by a dense growth of shrubbery.

"That is Glenburnie."

"So you told me as we passed it going. But I want to know something more about Glenburnie."

They were driving homeward. It was she who had pointed to the round noon shadows at the foot of the trees and advised him not to keep the early dinner waiting. She was leaning forward in the cart:

"This seems to be the grandest of all the grand old places you have shown me to-day. Go slower, please, John."

John touched the horse in the shafts between his small pointed ears with the stinging lash of his long driving-whip. It sprang forward violently.

"I said slower, not faster, John. And who lives at Glenburnie?"

"Some people by the name of Fairbanks."

"Fairbanks!" It was more of an exclamation than an echo.

He turned to look at her. What possible signification could the name have for her? She was as white as the stack of ostrich-plumes in the big hat under which Ninette had gone into eclipse. All through the drive she had rested one hand on the child's shoulder to keep her

steady. He could see the sudden contraction of the gloved fingers. Ninette turned upon her with pouting lips:

"Auntie, you hurt me."

She laughed, and hastily removed her hand. But there was no mirth in the laugh, and there was a peculiar glitter in her eyes, which John had never seen there before.

"We must be near neighbors of these Glenburnie Fairbanks," she said, leaning back in the cart, when it was no longer possible to study the face of the old house.

"It is the adjoining place," said John, mechanically. He felt like a man groping in a dream for a solution to a puzzle.

"And of course you know the Fairbanks?"

"We did know them once upon a time."

"*Did* know them! How does one go about unknowing people, John dear?"

"By willing it."

"But they live so near. I had no idea—that is—what does the family consist of, John?"

"An old man and a young woman."

"A handsome young woman?"

She had quite recovered from the emotion, inexplicable to John, which had carried her for a second completely out of her usual calm self-possession, and, as she asked this question, looked up into her husband's moody face with cheerful composure.

But just then the horse in the shafts shied violently. Ninette's big hat tumbled over the dash-board and was left a yard or two in the rear of the cart before John could clamber down for its recovery.

Ninette uttered her lamentations aloud, but Nora was more interested in the object which had caused the catastrophe than in the fate of Ninette's hat, although it was her very best.

An open umbrella, a large black cotton affair, with its handle supported against a stump, was the immediate cause of all their trouble. A young woman sitting on a stump, with an open book on her lap, suddenly furled the umbrella, thus bringing to view a large basket full of dewy cut flowers. She stood up as John came towards her. Ninette's hat lay almost at her feet. Nora could hear her saying, gravely,—

"I am distressed that my umbrella should have caused so much trouble. Vehicles seldom travel this road, and yours rolled so noiselessly in the soft earth that I did not hear you coming."

She held the furled umbrella in one hand, with the other she had pushed her large hat back from her forehead. Nora could see a pale, gentle face illuminated by large gray eyes. John stood irresolute for a second, then he went a step nearer.

"It is I who ought to apologize for trespassing. I did not notice the removal of the old fence. I am actually in the Glenburnie grounds?"

"Yes."

"I did not know the boundary-line had been extended."

"Pray don't apologize. The mistake was very natural."

"May I not even ask after your welfare, Ida?"

She looked over his shoulders to where Ninette, standing up in the cart, was eagerly pointing out the flowers of her preference to Nora.

"I am in perfect health, thank you. What an angelic child! I think the little lady is growing impatient."

John bit his moustache nervously, and, turning on his heel, walked hurriedly back to the cart. Something had got wrong with the harness while the horse had been backing and sidling, and it had to be remedied before he resumed the reins.

Miss Fairbanks lifted the basket of flowers from the sunny roadside. Ninette sent a shrill petition towards her before any one could interfere:

"Lady! Ninette wants one. A white one."

A large white japonica came fluttering through the air, falling directly into the child's lap. The "flower-

"LADY! NINETTE WANTS ONE. A WHITE ONE."

lady," as Ninette called her, kissed her hand to the small beggar, smiled at the child's scream of gratitude, and then placidly turned her back on the disabled cart.

"Who is she, John?" Nora asked, leaning over the dash-board to note progress.

"Miss Fairbanks."

"And her first name is Ida."

"How did you learn so much in such a short while?"

He was tightening a knot with his teeth. Mrs. John laughed maliciously. She was busy flecking the dust from Ninette's soiled plumes with her handkerchief.

"I heard you call her Ida, my dear."

"You have sharp ears," said John, looking at her without any confusion, as he resumed his place in the cart and took the reins from her hand. "I told you that we knew the Fairbanks."

"Intimately, I should judge. But what was she doing sitting on the public roadside with that big basket of cut flowers at her feet? How very strange it looked!"

"She sells the flowers, I am told."

"And was sitting at receipt of custom. Ah!"

"In point of fact," said John, with some asperity, "she was not on the public road. It seems the boundary fence has been moved, and the old road is now in the Glenburnie grounds. We are trespassers. I fancy she has to get the flowers off the premises without the old man's knowledge."

"Then the 'old man,' as you call him, is not an amiable old man?"

"Far from it. He is an infernal old churl. But haven't we had about enough of the Glenburnie people for this once?"

"Not by half. On the whole, I think I am going to find the Fairbanks altogether the most interesting people about White Cliffs."

It was not the words themselves, but a certain tenseness of voice and manner, which removed them from the realm of simple feminine curiosity. John felt unaccountably irritated by her manner. Nothing pleasant occurring to him to say, he lapsed into a grave revery, which lasted until the gate of White Cliffs was close in front of them.

Suddenly he shook himself, very much after the fashion of a big Newfoundland dog that has been uncomfortably dampened. He flung off his depression with a visible physical effort, and with it the feeling of inexplicable dissatisfaction with Nora. He freed his right hand from the whip and reins and slipped his arm about her round waist. There was no one to see.

"Norrie," he said, coaxingly, "don't let the child make a display of that flower. Put it in water up-stairs, somewhere."

"Why?"

"Because flowers like that bloom nowhere but at Glenburnie."

"Well?"

"And mother's dislike for everything connected with that name is not to be reasoned down. That white japonica would irritate her tremendously."

"Red rags and bulls, and so forth," said Nora, lightly. "Some of these days I will get you to give me the history of the Lorimer-Fairbanks feud. I think feuds are delightfully interesting. So aristocratic and clannish, you know."

It was one of her flippant days. John was distinctly conscious of certain recurrent periods of lightness in Nora's manner, that repelled him. There were days on which nothing seemed worth a serious thought to her. To-day was one of them.

He got down to open the big gate. When he turned towards the cart again, she, too, was upon the ground, holding up her arms to Ninette.

"Never mind driving into the yard, John. Ninette and I know very well how to use our own feet, and we have not had half enough of this glorious sunshine. Ta-ta."

With Ninette's tiny hand clasped in hers, she started back over the road they had just travelled at so brisk a walk that Ninette's short legs could only compete with it at full run.

John Lorimer looked after her in momentary surprise, then, with that unreasonableness which inclines the average man to take his ill

temper out of the nearest and most helpless thing at hand, he curled the long lash about his horse's flanks and sent him flying towards the stable-yard.

"You goes too fast, auntie," said Ninette, somewhat jerkily. "Ninette is tired."

"Does not Ninette want to see the beautiful flower-lady again?" Nora asked, without slackening her speed. But in another second she came to a full stop with an exclamation of disappointment:

"Ah! we are too late."

Along the dusty roadway a mule was lazily shambling. On his back a bent old negro was mounted, his two knotty hands clasped about the basket Miss Fairbanks had been guarding. From beneath the damp Spanish moss, brilliant hues and penetrating fragrance escaped.

Nora stood still and waited for him. When they were abreast, she held up one hand commandingly.

"Cabbages to sell, uncle?" she asked, in a clear, high voice.

"No cabbages, mistress."

"Onions, potatoes, turnips?"

"Only camelliers, violets, an' sweet olive, young mistress."

Nora made a sign of disappointment, then asked, carelessly, "And how often do you go to town with your basket?"

"Every day, marm."

"About this same time?"

"The same hour every day. Missy is like clock-work. Ef you weren't strange to these parts, you would 'a' heard that Miss Idy sells the flowers. I carries them to town for her. It looks like a queer sort of business. But Miss Idy don't care much what folks says or thinks."

"Miss Ida is right. Does she bring them down to the same place every day herself?"

"Every day, marm, rain or shine."

"Ride on, uncle. Your flowers will suffer by waiting." She waved him onward with the same imperious gesture that had brought him to a stand-still. Then she turned herself and Ninette slowly about.

"Come, my pet. We are too late this time. The flower-lady has gone away."

It was all one to Ninette. So long as she and Nora were together out under the soft blue sky, life was an entirely agreeable thing. It was only when she was handed over to Céleste that it became a burden. But she was to find that even her beloved Norrie could be tyrannical sometimes.

They were once more in front of the big white gate. Nora stooped, and, taking the japonica from the child's tight grasp, sent it as far as she could into a clump of wild indigo which grew along the roadside.

Ninette looked up at her in tearful amazement.

"Do not cry, my pet. It is already wilted. You shall have more. You shall have all you want. Some day all the flowers that bloom at Glenburnie shall be your very own."

Extravagant and groundless as this splendid promise may have sounded, it sufficed to send Ninette into the house smiling instead of weeping.

any more blows in his defence. Ida reseated herself upon the stump and drew him close to her by his collar. She looked him steadfastly in the eye. His glance quailed before hers. She freed one hand from his collar to pass it caressingly over his huge head. There was an apology in it and in her next words:

"Don't drop your eyes before mine, Stepniak. You are wiser than I, and truer. You learn your lesson of submission after one blow. It takes a great many for my teaching, and then the lesson is but half learned. You never lie, Stepniak. I do. I don't do anything else, in point of fact."

A single clear bugle-note rang out upon the quiet air. Another, and another! Stepniak wagged his tail expectantly. He recognized in it the summons for them to return to the house. The master of Glenburnie had himself hit upon this device for curtailing what he was pleased to call "the girl's wandering proclivities."

"You have the best of me at last, Step," said the girl. "When we get back to the house, you will stretch yourself in the sunshiniest corner of the gallery—in peace. When dinner is over, you will crunch your chicken-bones—in peace. When night comes, you will go to your kennel—in peace. Come, let us go home, Step."

At the first tap of her boot-heels on the hard marble floor of the hall, a withered, yellow face, surmounted by a brilliant turban, appeared at one of the doors opening into it. The yellow face wore a palpable look of anxiety. Ida looked at her questioningly.

"Well, Ma'm Dido?"

"It ain't well, my baby. He's in a way."

"He is always in a way, Dido. Can't you get used to things?—as I have?" She added this clause with a dry laugh full of irony.

"He's in a worse way than usual, my poor darling, and I don't feel easy about your going up. Hunt says he believes he's heard from Mr. Sib. He got a letter to-day from somewhere."

"From my brother Sibley?"

"That's what Hunt thinks. He's just been a-charging up there, my child. I don't feel safe 'bout your going nigh him."

"Nonsense!" Ida was smoothing her hair with her hands in front of the hat-rack glass. She was supremely quiet outwardly. All the passion she had displayed out there in the woods was either expended or once more under control. She was a trifle paler than usual, but then Ma'm Dido was not given to critical observation.

"I ain't so sure it is nonsense, my baby. At any rate, here I stay until you come down-stairs again."

"Very well. I have not the least objection to that. I think it probable I shall dine down-stairs to-day. Tell Fanshaw, please."

Overhead they could hear the ceaseless shuffling of slippered feet. Ma'm Dido pointed to the ceiling:

"He's been going on that way for nigh two hours."

"Poor old man! Poor old unhappy father! And I have been very wicked this morning. I am a wretch."

It was to herself and not to Ma'm Dido she made this humble confession as she hurried up the broad stairway that curved in an elegant spiral through the central hall at Glenburnie.

CHAPTER V.

HE entered the room up-stairs prepared for a contest. She rather enjoyed the prospect of the fray. The necessity for some outlet to the pent-up excitement of the day was laid upon her very strongly.

"Father, have you heard from Sibley?" she asked, abruptly.

"D—n Sibley!"

"As you please about that; but have you heard from him? Dido tells me you had a letter this morning."

"D—n Dido!"

"No objection in the world to that, either, if it will contribute to your peace of mind."

She came forward with the air of a Van Amberg entering the cage of some particularly untrustworthy animal. Circumstances must decide whether cajolery or the lash (figuratively in this case) must be used.

The shuffling slippered feet came to a halt just as their wearer reached an immense upholstered chair, into which he dropped with a sigh of physical exhaustion.

Ida had taken up position in the low cushioned window-seat, where, clasping her hands about her knees, she sat slowly swinging one little dusty boot backward and forward, while she looked at her father as steadfastly as she had looked at her mastiff Stepniak in the woods half an hour ago.

"Your boot is dusty, disgustingly dusty," said her father, peevishly, totally ignoring her twice-repeated question.

"Both of them are. It has not rained for two weeks, you know."

"And your attitude is excessively unladylike, Ida."

"So is overseeing."

She was calmly surveying the offending boot as it swung into and out of sight.

"You have not answered my question, father. Have you heard from Sibley?"

"Why should I hear from Sibley?" he snarled, showing a set of perfect teeth, very much as an angry dog might have shown his.

"Why? Because there are only two male Fairbanks left. Because it is not right that one of them should shut himself up senselessly in a luxurious hermitage, and the other flee to the uttermost limits of the earth, leaving a girl to struggle with this horrid plantation. It is not right, father, and if you have heard from Sibley I want his address. I want to write to him."

"What would you say to him?"

"I would tell him to come back home and take his rightful place as the master of Glenburnie."

"I am not dead yet, girl."

"You are to all intents and purposes."

It was a daringly uttered taunt. His eyes glittered dangerously.

SHE SAT SLOWLY SWINGING ONE LITTLE DUSTY BOOT BACKWARD AND FORWARD.

His hands—idle hands, softer, whiter, and smoother than Ida's busy ones—gripped the arms of his chair until white gristly spots appeared on every knuckle.

"Look at me, girl!"

"Well, sir, I am looking." She was, unflinchingly.

"What do you see?"

"A very handsome man, in a perfect state of health. Not an old man, either. His hair is scarcely gray at all. And his eyes are positively luminous, especially just now that he is in a fury. I see a man who, with every faculty unimpaired, and, presumably, in his right mind, is yet content to live within the narrow circuit of four rooms, has his food brought to him as if he were a cripple or an octogenarian, and has abrogated his rights and duties in life as completely as a dead man could."

She took no note of his increasing frenzy. His voice, choked with passion, did not cause the fluttering of an eyelid.

"I wonder if you have forgotten, Ida, that I drove your brother Sibley out of this house?"

"No, sir, I have not forgotten it."

"And do you know what for?"

"For daring to tell the truth, as I have just done."

"For less,—far less." He was brandishing his meerschaum pipe menacingly.

"If I don't speak it to you, father, no one will. No one cares enough for you to do it. I want you to break that senseless vow and take your place at the head of your own affairs, or else send for your son to do it. I am tired of carrying your burdens and his. My own are great enough." She had dropped taunts for serious protest.

"Your own? Your burdens? I suppose you mean Dennis Lorimer?"

"That is one of the burdens I have laid down."

Her face had suddenly grown as white as the wall behind her, but her soft musical voice remained perfectly steady.

"You have! By heaven, that looks like it!"

He sent a heavy envelope flying through the space between them. Ida looked at it amazedly. It was addressed to herself. She turned it slowly over and over. The seal was intact. She looked calmly into her father's angry face:

"Thank you, sir."

She got up heavily and walked towards the fireplace.

"Where are you going?" Mr. Fairbanks asked. The tall back of his chair hid them from each other, and the exertion of turning himself about was too great.

"I am not going anywhere."

He heard a soft crackling. A bright blaze sprang up in the open fireplace. There was a smell of burnt paper afloat in the air. She came back to her seat quietly.

"You have burned it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Without reading it?"

"You know that."

"But it was a love-letter."

"From a coward."

"Why do you call him that? I imagine I hate the Lorimers worse than you possibly could do, but it would never occur to me to call any one of them cowardly."

"It does occur to me. I do not hate Dennis Lorimer,—at least, I did not,—nevertheless I call him a coward."

"Why?"

She flung out her hands with a gesture of impatience.

"Bah! What a detestable morning this has been! Are you not ready for your game of chess, father?"

"No. Let me hear what is going on on the place."

She drew a book from her pocket and spread it open before him. Her face wore its most sullen expression.

"Why do you not mount your horse and ride over the place yourself, father, if you care to know anything about it?"

He made an impatient gesture. "Shall I have to repeat for your instruction my solemnly-registered vow, registered over your mother's coffin, girl?"

"Spare me! I know it by heart. Imbecility!" She muttered the last word between her teeth.

"Moreover, the time has gone by for me to cope with the changed conditions of labor. There is nothing but defeat and humiliation left for the gentlemen of the old régime. Let the freed slaves work out their own salvation, on the rental system. It is not necessary for me to come in personal contact with them. I should never draw a comfortable breath if I was compelled to be a daily eye-witness of the ruin that has overtaken Glenburnie. With you it is different. You have no recollection of its ante-bellum glories."

"Yes, with me it is different," said Ida, bitterly; then she forced his wandering attention in the direction of the foreman's weekly report, as set forth in the book she had placed in his hand.

"Yes, yes. Doubtless it is all perfectly correct. What a splendid business-man is thrown away in you, my daughter! Have we not had enough? The account is somewhat prolix."

He concealed a yawn behind his large white silk pocket-handkerchief, which exhaled a perfume more delicate than that of any of Ida's marketable flowers.

She was relentless. He should hear her out.

"I have not given you yet the number of sacks of seeds stored for the next planting. And Ralston says the gin ought to be insured. I think he is right."

"By all means insure it, then." He was leaning back in his large chair, caressing his handsome side-whiskers with the hand that was ornamented with his largest solitaire.

"By the way, Ida, what is the condition of our cellar?"

"There is some sherry, claret, and Catawba down-stairs."

She did not tell him that the flowers from her garden had been transmuted into wine for his cellar.

"Send claret up with my dinner, will you?"

It was a note of dismissal. He handed her back the book in which she had compelled him to keep tally while she read from her own. Perhaps, during the reading of it, it dawned upon him that Ida had "rather a rough time of it for a handsome young woman." He graciously bestowed upon her an indulgent smile: "Not very lucid, but as clear, I suppose, as one could expect from a woman and an uneducated foreman. Pray, my daughter, give more explicit directions about my mutton. It was simply a mess yesterday."

Ida took the book away from him and put it back into her own pocket. He was smiling up into her face like a child who was vaguely conscious of having merited punishment of some sort, but stood in no fear of its immediate infliction.

"What manner of man was this that she was called upon to honor and to obey?" It was not the first time that she had asked herself

that question in intense bitterness of soul. The answer seemed farther off than ever to-day.

She had purposely tried to goad him into a sense of shame for his indolent attitude and his unmanly shifting of the responsibilities that were his upon her weak shoulders. She had deliberately and purposely been insolent to him. To what purpose? They had gone all around the drearily familiar circle and drifted back to his mutton and his wine! There was no holding him to any serious purpose. The only evidence of tenacity that Ames Fairbanks had ever given to the world was in his observance of a vow which Ida well called "that old war-time imbecility," and in his hatred of the Lorimers. Ida knew the origin of what he grandiloquently called his "sacred vow." He had come home on furlough during the civil war, summoned to his wife's death-bed, and had found his home occupied by the enemy, who had confined his family to the upper story. Running unwittingly in this trap, he was himself relegated to the floor which he had since converted into a hermitage, and was there made a paroled prisoner.

There, in his wrath, he registered a vow: he would never descend the steps that led to the polluted first floor of his home, until carried out of it in his coffin.

Cynical people said that Ames Fairbanks, pleasure-loving, sybaritish, selfish, and indolent, found it easier to keep this vow than to wrestle with the new order of things. Hence his rigid observance of it.

The close of the war found him with a diminished family,—Sibley, his oldest son, then a boy of eighteen; Ida, his youngest girl, then a girl of ten. Sibley had struggled feebly with the wretched and disorganized estate. He was too much like his father to succeed in anything that required stable resolve and drudging insistence. Both men were fitted exclusively to adorn the luxurious circles of society. Both men were superb physically, but defective morally. They clashed perpetually. There was no one but a girl-child to adjust matters between them. The result was disastrous, but natural. Sibley, sore, tired, angry, had taunted his father, years ago, as Ida had taunted him that day, and had thrown the whole miserable business up, and had gone away, with a cruel indifference to Ida's fate. They had never heard a word from him since.

The burden he had selfishly cast off, Ida had patiently lifted and carried, so far, with commendable fortitude. If she sometimes staggered under it, small wonder. On this particular occasion she left her father's presence more than ever convicted of folly in having made any appeal to him.

"I might as well turn for help to that pretty child who held out her hands and begged a flower of me. He makes me think of a great gorgeous butterfly, sitting with lazily folded wings, not caring how the world goes."

Dido was sitting on the front steps knitting in the sunshine and crooning a song which Ida remembered often hearing her croon in the nursery days before "mother and the baby died." She went over and sat down by the old woman, clasping her hands about her knees

in her favorite attitude. Dido smiled her pleasure at having her so close.

"Ma'm Dido, how long have you been at Glenburnie?" she asked, suddenly.

"Been at Glenburnie! As long as there's been any Glenburnie to be at. Your grandpa Fairbanks brought me here with the swamp folks, when he clear this place up."

"Then of course you know all the Fairbanks secrets?"

"Jus' listen to Miss Ida!"

Dido looked very wise, as she closed her withered lips tightly after that scornful utterance.

"And you know why my father and the Lorimers hate each other?"

Dido's knitting-needles fairly flew. She was looking straight before her, and out towards the distant front gate. A trailing dust-cloud was visible beyond it, in the road.

"I reckon that mus' be Cato kickin' up that dus'," she remarked, inconsequently.

"Of course you know, Dido, and I mean to know too. It is my right. I am no child, to be kept in the dark any longer. Does Glenburnie hate White Cliffs, or does White Cliffs hate Glenburnie? Which place began it, Ma'm Dido?"

"I'm a piece of Glenburnie," said the old retainer, proudly, "and I don't hate nothing under the shining canopy. Our heavenly Father made Glenburnie folks and White Cliff folks out er the same sort of dirt, I take it, honey. What for are you troubling your pretty head about it, my child?"

Ida laughed shortly. She was quite sure Dido would never satisfy her curiosity. To whom else could she turn?

"I want to know about that old quarrel. Sibley knows."

"All the men-folks on both sides knows."

"Did Dennis Lorimer know, when he asked me to marry him?"

Dido moved restlessly. She was being cornered. Suddenly she lifted one withered hand and shielded her eyes with it.

"I said that must be Cato! That surely is Cato's mule, but what's that on old Rube's back?"

Ida looked too. There, coming towards the house, was Cato, walking contentedly by old Rube's head, the empty flower-basket swung over one arm, while his horny right hand was planted firmly among Ninette's white ruffles and embroideries, by way of steadying her in the capacious saddle. Cato sent an explanation a few steps in advance of him:

"They was sauntering 'long the roadside, as I come 'long back, and she asked me to ride her some. I told her I was hurrying back to Glenburnie, and then her ma told me to let her come, and she would send the nuss after her. So here we is."

He planted the child squarely on her feet between Ida and Ma'm Dido. Ninette smiled impartially on them all.

"Norrie said I might go to see the flower-lady, and I have come," she said, composedly shaking out her short tumbled skirts.

Dido looked away from the bright baby face to Ida's. "My child," she said, solemnly, "maybe the good God is bent on healing up that old sore. If he ain't, how come it he fashioned such a link as that between Glenburnie and White Cliffs?"

"Link?"

"Link. By the look of her, she belongs here to us. She's a Fairbanks from the crown of her purty head to the soles of her blessed feet. But she b'longs over yonder too. It do seem as if he meant to say you twain must be made one."

"Dido, you are gone daft," Ida said, tartly; but for the child that belonged to the Lorimers she had only smiles.

CHAPTER VI.

AT the moment when recall became impossible, Mrs. John admitted to herself that she had done a very rash thing in precipitating Ninette upon the Fairbanks in this sudden fashion.

How was she to get the child back?

It was one thing to tell old Cato that she would send the child's nurse after her, and quite another thing to induce the fastidious Céleste to trudge the one dusty mile of country road that lay between the two plantations.

If the road had been lined with gay shops, now, it would have been altogether different. She almost hated this Frenchwoman, who was so essential to Ninette, for the amount of abject diplomacy required for her management.

"For Ninette's sake," was the formula which Nora applied to more rasping things than the *bonne*. She approached the intractable Céleste smoothly and graciously:

"Céleste, you ought to be out in the sunshine. The day is perfect. Those ruffles can wait."

The *bonne*'s yellow fingers were busy with the crimping-iron. She looked up surprisedly:

"Why should one care to go out in this savage country? There is nothing, madame, to see, but the wild beasts of the fields and dismal cotton-fields. They make one sicker than ever with the homesickness."

Mrs. John laughed indulgently:

"Wild beasts? Do you call Mrs. Lorimer's short-horns, and the horses, wild beasts? Seriously, Céleste, you will have to face them. I want you to go after Ninette."

"Go after the child! What has madame done with her?"

"I let her take a short ride with the old man who carries the flowers to market."

Céleste raised horrified hands: "The black savage!"

"Black, but much less of a savage than some of us who have lily-white hands. He was on his way home, and Ninette begged so."

"She always begs so. Where was he to leave the child?—bah!—for all the world like an express package."

"He was to take her over to Glenburnie, and you were to go for her. A lovely short one-mile walk, through the most beautiful grove you ever saw, Céleste."

CÉLESTE RAISED HORRIFIED HANDS: "THE BLACK SAVAGE!"

"I abhor groves. Groves are only meant for savages to live in. Glenburnie! Glenburnie!" She repeated the name musingly. "That is where the old man lives who never comes down his own stairway, but permits his beautiful young lady daughter to sacrifice herself to him. Monsieur Fairbanks. Bah, *quelle brute!*"

"You have gathered information rapidly," said Nora, coldly. "Yes, it is there that Ninette is waiting for you."

"And madame, then, will permit the child to visit at the house of an enemy?"

"Madame" looked at the speaker sharply. How many more family secrets was this demure-looking cat already in possession of?

"Whose enemy? What nonsense you are talking, Céleste!"

"Is it nonsense, madame? Do not the Lorimers and the Fairbanks hate each other? And does not every black man and black woman on both places know it? A woman, some say, is at the bottom of the trouble. I will fetch the child home, but I will not dare come back by the public road, nor enter the front door of White Cliffs and say, 'I have just brought the child from Glenburnie.'"

"Céleste, you are insufferable."

But, boldly as she uttered the rebuke, conscience convicted Mrs. John of sharing the woman's feelings. No more words passed on the subject. Céleste prepared for her walk with sulky activity. Nora watched her furtively. She was sorry she had aroused the woman's quick temper. Ninette, "poor little angel," might suffer vicariously.

"And to think," she said aloud, as Céleste left the room, closing the door after her with significant force, "that I have, to-day, taken only the initial step!"

She walked to a side-window to see if Céleste had taken the right "turn" after getting into the road. She stood there idly staring out at the monotonous landscape long after the woman had passed entirely beyond her range of vision.

She did not care to join the family group down-stairs. It was such an unusual thing to see her without Ninette that it might lead to inconvenient questions. As she stood there, her husband came into view from the side-porch, and passed down the walk towards the small gate which Céleste had just gone through.

He had on his corduroy hunting-suit. His gun was slung across his shoulder, and three dogs trotted close upon his heels. His back was necessarily turned towards her. She wafted a kiss towards him from the tips of her smooth white fingers, then laughed softly at her own folly:

"Poor John! Poor old simple confiding John! He melts me to pity. I am so sorry for him."

Why she should have selected that particular moment for so expressing herself was known to herself alone.

John Lorimer did not look like a fit object for commiseration. He was, like all the Lorimer boys, straight of limb and strong of muscle, and carried his handsome head somewhat defiantly. Just then he was whistling "Captain Jinks" with more force than melody. The wind wafted the air to her in broken snatches. As he walked he settled the strap to his hunting-pouch more comfortably about his collar-bone.

Some one halted him as he reached the small gate. Nora could see a letter handed over the pickets to her husband. On the other side of the gate stood a very old man. He was bent with age. She could not recall ever having encountered him in any of her walks or drives.

The matter of a note handed to her husband by one of the people on the place would not have cost her a second thought, had not John behaved so curiously about it.

She could see him conceal the white envelope between his two large hands while he glanced in every direction, taking the lower part of the house in with a furtive sweep; after which he seemed to make a point of securing himself against observation while he read it. He planted himself squarely in front of the gate, with his back towards her point of observation, and held the paper at close range. After the reading, a hurried colloquy ensued between him and the man on the other side of the gate, who hobbled away at its close, leaving John standing in the same spot, evidently sunk in a profound revery.

He had leaned his gun against the gate-post while reading the

letter. He picked it up presently, examined the lock abstractedly, and passed slowly out through the gate, closing it absently upon the noses of the three dogs. They ran yelping and protesting against this piece of inconsiderateness, until a low place in the fence furnished them their opportunity, when they vaulted over it, and, with their bruised noses close to the ground, soon disappeared, running in the direction John had taken.

John's wife turned away from the window, now that there was nothing more to be seen, conscious of a very lively curiosity touching the note which had, before her very eyes, transformed her husband almost instantaneously from a quick-stepping, careless, whistling huntsman into a grave, slow-moving, profoundly abstracted man.

"He had forgotten all about the dogs, evidently, and he stopped whistling! It takes a decided shock to make John break off a tune in the middle."

But whatever might have been the condition of his nerves when he passed through the gate going, to all seeming they were in admirable order when he entered her room some hours later, in a terribly bespattered condition, but radiant over his modicum of success.

"Nine snipe and three rabbits! How is that for a two hours' hunt, Mrs. John, by a man who hasn't had his finger on a trigger for a year?"

"It is a miracle, if I am to take my cue from your face, dear."

She was scanning him curiously. Would he tell her anything about the note? She let her eyes drop slowly from his face to his mud-spattered ankles.

"How does one contrive to get so muddy in such dry weather, John?"

"Snipe,—swamp-birds, you know. No end of trouble to secure them. But I fancied they would be a treat to you and Ninette. Where is the monkey?"

"Céleste and she are out together, somewhere. She will be in presently."

No; it was evident he did not intend to tell her anything about that note. She had scarcely expected he would. On the other hand, she did not intend to tell him about Ninette's visit to Glenburnie. Was she in a position to cast stones? A secret for a secret.

The dinner-bell rang while he was still busy with the wisp broom, ridding himself of his forest accretions.

"You are not going to dinner in that rig?"

She turned from the mirror, where she had been putting the last precise touches to her own dinner toilette, to ask this question, as there was no sign of John's doffing his corduroys.

"I think I must to-day. I will apologize to mother."

"I don't think Mrs. Lorimer accepts apologies very gracefully. She prefers your not offending."

"I know it; but I have to take another tramp after dinner, and she will have to take me as I am this time."

"More snipe?"

"Yes,—no; that is, of course I shall take my gun along; but you mustn't always count on my being so successful." His evident nervousness increased with every word.

"I never count on anything," she said, enigmatically, as together they descended the stairway to the dining-room. Just as they reached it, she tried an experiment:

"If you will wait for me to slip into a flannel dress after dinner, I will tramp with you. I am a splendid walker."

"I could not think of such a thing," he said, with irritated emphasis: "it would wear you literally out."

"As you please," she said, coolly. "I fancied you would like to have me go."

"Under any other circumstances—I mean, at any other time—that is——"

"You are floundering, John dear, abominably."

They were in the dining-room now, and John was excusing his hunting-garb to his mother.

"Going again, after dinner? It gets dark very early, you know, John. I like to have you all about me when the lamps are lighted, John."

"I know it, mother. But I must go this afternoon."

His brow contracted and his lids drooped until his eyes were almost invisible. Nora had learned the danger-signal. He had reached the limits of endurance.

The dinner was rather a failure socially. Dick and Rafe clattered their forks and their tongues incessantly, but to no purpose, so far as brightening the atmosphere was concerned.

Lorimer and John were both gravely abstracted.

"I wonder if he knows," Nora said to herself, glancing at her brother-in-law's handsome serious face.

She was not sorry John did not go back to their room with her. Ninette was up there. She had heard her little feet pattering over their heads for some time. Céleste had smuggled her into the house while they were all at table. By to-morrow the child would have forgotten all about her visit to the flower-lady, but to-day she might make indiscreet revelations.

Céleste's mood had changed altogether since leaving the house. Her eyes were sparkling, and her whole meagre person seemed inflated with an air of importance. Nora looked at her in surprise. She had anticipated at least three days of the sulks.

"The walk has done you good," she said, kindly. "I told you you ought to get out in the sunlight more."

Céleste stopped in front of her, with her hands folded over Ninette's cloak. She snapped the fingers of one hand audibly:

"That for a walk among wild weeds and dust. But I have made a discovery, madame. Bah! it is the people who set themselves up for saints in this world who are the sly and underhanded ones. I never set myself up for a saint. No one ever called Céleste Bougereaux a saint."

She laughed aloud with malicious glee.

"No one will ever be tempted to call you one until you look a little more like one than you do at this moment, Céleste. Who is it that you call sly and underhanded?"

It was distinctly her duty to make this woman either speak more plainly or else hold her peace entirely. She was not prepared for Céleste's triumphantly prompt reply:

"Miss Fairbanks,—the beautiful saintly Miss Fairbanks, who sacrifices herself for her recluse of a father and yet consents to meet her lover clandestinely in the woods. Bah! it is only saints who can afford to run such risks."

Nora had grown white to the very lips. She abhorred herself almost as greatly as she did the yellow-skinned, glittering-eyed, grinning wretch in front of her, for her own next words:

"I want to know exactly what you mean, Céleste, and all that you mean."

"With pleasure, madame. I was so careless as not to notice, until I had got nearly to the front gate of Glenburnie, that the child had lost one of her turquoise shoulder-bracelets. I left her among the flowers in the garden, while I ran back to the house for it. The pillars to that front veranda are miracles of bigness, madame. Miss Fairbanks must not have seen my approach. She was looking down upon the old man who sells her flowers. He stood upon the ground. I heard her say, very distinctly, but in a voice that was not quite steady, 'Tell him yes,—I will come this once.' And the old man answered back, 'Dry Bayou, remember, missy, five o'clock.' 'Dry Bayou,—five o'clock. I will be there, Cato, tell Mr.——' Then, madame, Miss Fairbanks saw me, and her face, the pure white face of a saint, became redder than those roses she gave the child. That is exactly what I mean, madame, and all that I mean."

"Céleste, you are a devil."

"And Miss Fairbanks is a saint. That is as I have already said. —Come, Ninette, it is time you took your bath. I must wash the dust of Glenburnie from your feet, or you too may grow up to be a saint."

She disappeared, dragging the reluctant Ninette with her. Nora sat quite still, enveloped in all the pain and the powerlessness of a hideous nightmare.

In that nightmare trance she saw, disconnectedly, a beautiful woman sitting by the roadside, a withered black hand extending a white envelope towards her husband, John's hurried and unusual afternoon departure, Céleste's mocking face and malicious gossip.

"What then?" she asked, vehemently, aloud.

After a long silence she answered her own question:

"It would be nothing more than I deserve."

CHAPTER VII.

RY BAYOU! Dry Bayou! Dry Bayou!"

The words set themselves to the somewhat uneven tick-t-tock of the wheezy old clock on her mantel-shelf. She absently looked the clock in the face, and it made a wild suggestion to her. One of its long black rusty hands was pointing to the figure nine; the other was creeping steadily onward in the direction of the figure five. Fifteen minutes to five o'clock.

Why might not she explore Dry Bayou before dark? True, she was profoundly ignorant as to its whereabouts, and to inquire her way would not be practicable under the circumstances; but there could not possibly be any danger of really getting lost on the place.

There was no one to object nor to question her as she walked boldly down the long spiral stairway and out at the side-entrance, with nothing about her head and shoulders but a light woollen shawl, selected because of its subdued brown color, which would "mingle easily with the reddish brown of the tall sedge-grass."

She had calculated all the chances: Mrs. Lorimer was unfailingly due in the dairy at that time of day, Lorimer as unfailingly at the corn-crib, supervising the mule's evening meal; Dick and Rafe, her most devoted squires, were fortunately out at the landing, keeping watch and ward over a big shipment of cotton.

She drew her shawl closer about her shoulders as she passed from under the shelter of the portico. It was cooler than she had expected to find it, and there was a suggestion of rain in the raw autumn air. At a less excited moment, she would probably have turned back and given up her rash expedition, or else prepared herself for disagreeable possibilities with waterproof and umbrella.

She did neither. She pushed on as rapidly as possible; past the straggling negro cabins, whence the odor of frying bacon and weak coffee floated sickeningly to her disgusted nostrils; beyond the large wooden boundary-gate, which sagged so badly on its hinges that it required both her hands and all of her strength to open it; out into the uncultivated parts of the place, where the dry rattling corn- and cotton-stalks gave way to broad expanses of tall reddish sedge-grass which lined the clayey slopes, and made acceptable bits of color, in bright contrast with the vivid evergreen of the dwarf pines that soon closed her in from possible detection from the house.

She moved forward without any definite plan of action, or any defined course. Wherever she detected the slightest indication of a trodden path among the slippery pine needles, she followed it to its termination: perhaps it would end suddenly where a straggling growth

of cane had tempted the hungry cattle into pleasant by-ways. She could hear the soft tinkle of cow-bells amidst the dense greenery of the cane that waved far above their horned heads and closed them in from sight. Perhaps it would end, in the most inconsequential fashion, in the midst of a clump of pines, over whose dwarfed heads she could see a chill pallid pink glow feebly painting the western sky.

With abrupt suddenness one of these blind leads began to descend. At her feet lay a ravine. Deep, deep downwards it extended, its ragged sides clothed with woodland growths of manifold sorts. Tall trees there were, vine-clad with ruddy-leaved creepers to their very apex, standing so far down in the ravine that their leafy crowns were on a level with her own unsheltered head. A tangled wilderness of shrubs and trees spread at her feet. She could hear sleepy birds twittering among the branches of the trees. She could see where the same tangled growth of vine, shrub, and tree, that fell abruptly away from her where she stood on a grassy projection, climbed upward again as abruptly across an intervening space of perhaps fifty feet.

"This must be Dry Bayou! And to think she never should have heard of it before!"

She came to a halt with her feet planted among the soft green mosses, while the red-brown plumes of the sedge-grass waved closely about her slender shoulders. It was very still out there. "Solemnly beautiful," she called it. The soft gray twilight enwrapped the earth earlier there than elsewhere. Stretching at her feet was a narrow but distinct trail. She shrank from the descent. It was late. It would be no pleasant thing to lose one's self down there among those bosky shadows.

Close to her, so close that she could have leaned against its trunk had she been so minded, stood an oak-tree whose life-current had been sapped by the usurping mistletoe that clothed the gray dead branches with clusters of living green. A mocking-bird fluttered across the shadowy ravine, and, lighting upon a mistletoe bough, woke the echoes with his varied melody. John's wife pushed the damp hair that was clinging to her temples back behind her small ears, with a gesture of impatience that was linked to pain.

The mocking-bird was calling to his mate. Where was the wanderer? The plaintive note of a wood-pigeon floated up to her from the shadowy recesses of Dry Bayou. It furnished a dulcet minor to the mocking-bird's clear notes. It struck a responsive chord in the excited fancy of that lonely listener there among the russet grasses.

"She is lonely, that unseen dove! So am I! Oh, John, so am I!" She laughed hysterically at what she called, in audible tones, a wild foolish fancy begotten of the hour and the place. Her moods were as variant as the notes of the mocking-bird still shrilling his love-song under the mistletoe bough. With a sudden out-flinging of her arms, she called aloud, "John! John Lorimer! Husband! Where are you, John?"

The mocking-bird hushed his whistling, and flew away, startled. Only the far-off tinkling of a cow-bell, and the nearer plaintive moan

of the wood-pigeon, broke the death-like stillness. Her excited nerves were not soothed by nature's pliant mood. She stamped her foot passionately, crying aloud, "A sweet, wild trysting-place for a saint and a married man! I abhor myself! I abhor him!"

Then reason itself seemed to fly away startled, as the mocking-bird had done, and left John's wife standing there, a quivering, wonder-struck, passion-swayed woman, no longer capable of rational action or thought.

Two moving objects had come upon the still landscape, across the narrow ravine, blurring and blotting out all the beauty of it for Nora Lorimer.

From her coigne of vantage she could plainly discern John's tall muscular figure in its garb of drab corduroy. He was slightly in advance of his companion,—a woman, well muffled in hood and gossamer, better guarded against the chill autumnal air than poor little Nora had thought to guard herself.

John trudged fearlessly and sure-footedly down the crooked winding trail on the opposite side of the ravine. His companion followed more timorously. At a certain spot, Nora saw her husband hesitate: then with a long stride he stepped across a wide crevice in the brown earth. He turned towards his companion with both hands outstretched. She could hear him ask, in a clear high voice, full of encouragement,—

"Dare you venture the leap?"

"With your help, yes," came back to him confidingly.

He held out his hands. She stretched hers to him across the narrow gulf. Their hands joined: for a moment the tall slight form swayed uncertainly, then they were together once more. Nora could see it all,—the hands clasped so tightly, the fearless leap, the moment of close contact, when it seemed to her that John stood there before her very eyes, clasping that other woman, that saint, Ida Fairbanks, tenderly to his bosom.

The next moment their hands fell apart, and in the same order as before, he leading fearlessly, she following confidingly, they passed beyond her range of vision, and were swallowed up by the shadows.

After they had disappeared, Nora came out from behind her screen of sedges and looked about in uncertainty for half a second. What if she should meet them face to face on her homeward walk! Anything but that. She would not know how to behave in such a case.

She turned her face towards the bayou. The shadows were growing blacker, the silence denser. No matter. There she would be secure from the one real danger in life,—the danger of meeting her husband and Ida Fairbanks walking alone in the gloaming.

She plunged downward, along the narrow trail, rapidly, heedlessly, recklessly. The brambles caught her garments and rent them. The thorns crowned her of their own cruel will. Wide cracks yawned in the ground at her feet. "Without his aid," she said, laughing hysterically, and bounded across each, like a deer. Now she was in the bed of the dry bayou! Dark tree-lined walls climbed upward on both sides of her, far, far,—interminably. She had turned and twisted about so

sinuously among the scraggy bushes and the thick trees that she had grown bewildered. Which of those upward-climbing trails ought she to take to get back to Ninette? Only to Ninette. There was no one else she cared to go back to in all the wide world. One of them she must take. She could not spend the night there, where every rustle among the dry twigs conjured up the slimy convolutions of a rattle-snake or a deadly moccasin. She made her choice. She climbed upward, steadily, wearily, but rapidly. The steep walls began to fall away from her. The shadows grew less black. The gray sky once more spread before her in an unbroken expanse over a treeless field. But—she was on the wrong side of the bayou! She was quite sure she had never seen that small cabin, almost hidden away under a heavy gourd-vine growth.

There was a glow as of fire, shining faintly through the cracks of the daubed log walls. At least here was humanity and a possible guide back through that terrible bayou.

She approached the door of the hut timorously and pushed it open. There was no one inside. A wood-fire burned low upon the hearth, but evidently it had not been replenished for quite a while. The logs had fallen apart, and their charred ends pointed upward independently of each other. But warmth and shelter both were here.

She was shivering from exposure, fatigue, and excitement. Even that neglected fire in a negro cabin was comforting. Two rough splint-bottomed chairs stood in front of the fireplace. Nora flung herself into one and spread her chilled hands out over the blaze. It was inadequate to her needs. With a petulant movement she reached for the clumsy tongs and brought the divorced logs into closer connection. A bright flame leaped up to reward her for her energy, and brought into view something which had escaped her notice in the previous obscurity of the room.

It was a woman's handkerchief,—a plain white hemstitched affair, marked, in ink, "I. F."

Nora held it before the blaze a half-second, then with a curious smile about her white lips began slowly smoothing it out upon her knees. When it was as smooth as she could possibly make it by that process, she folded it and laid it away in her pocket.

She had forgotten where she was,—forgotten the necessity for getting home, even for Ninette's sake. She sat there staring into the mended fire, now folding her hands patiently, now twisting and twining the slim white fingers about each other in a perfect passion of unrest. She was reminded of her whereabouts by a harsh but not disrespectful voice in the door of the cabin, asking, surprisedly,—

"You here yet, missy?"

She sprang up quickly, and, turning her back upon the bright blaze, answered, promptly,—

"Yes, I am here yet, waiting for you to see me home."

"I thought Mars' John promise to see you safe home?"

It was evident this humble householder did not relish turning out again in the raw air. He shuffled slowly towards her.

"I let him go without me," said Nora, faintly.

"You oughtn' t'had done that, Miss Idy. Mr. John's younger than ol' Isham, and a safer guide in the dark. But I don't begrudge the trouble, my chil'; not me. Come on, then: we don't want no questions asked 'bout this day's doings."

"No, we don't want any questions asked. Come on, Isham. You shall just put me on the other side of the bayou. Then I can go alone," Nora answered, marvelling at her own powers of dissimulation.

It was either an easier journey made under the old man's guidance, or the wild tumult in her heart and brain triumphed to the point of obliterating all physical sensations.

She was at home, in her own room, with Céleste kneeling before her unbuttoning her dew-dampened boots, before she clearly realized her departure from the cabin.

"Mr. Lorimer has been to the door twice to inquire for madame's headache. The last time I told him it ached so badly that it might be best for him to sleep in another apartment to-night. So he left his regrets, and said if you needed him I was to knock at the door just across the hall."

"Thank you, Céleste. I shall not need him."

She closed her lids upon the hot, crowding tears. The Frenchwoman's astuteness had saved her a scene. Even for her there was cause of gratitude left in a world that had suddenly turned black,—oh, so black!

CHAPTER VIII.

"MADAME, I can keep them out no longer. Bah, the provincials! Madame Lorimer, the old one, insists upon plasters! As if" (in a fierce aside) "broken hearts could be plastered together like broken cups. The handsome Mr. Lorimer, the one who is so well satisfied with his name that he repeats it twice, wishes you to be cupped and scarified; the young men Richard and Raphael look stupid and disconsolate. Mr. Lorimer says—your Mr. Lorimer, of course—that he insists upon your either admitting him or the doctor. The doctor has been to the house twice in these two days. And the child! Her wailing maddens them. They are not used to children."

"Nor to being bullied out of their rights by children's nurses. Céleste, leave the room. You have lied to me."

This startling interruption came from John Lorimer himself. He had opened the door softly, fearful of disturbing his wife, whom Céleste, five minutes before, had represented as abed with no decrease of the neuralgic attack which had rendered her invisible to all the household, excepting herself, for two days now.

"BY MADAME'S ORDERS."

"Lied! monsieur?"

"Yes, lied."

"By madame's orders, monsieur," with a shrug more insolent than any words.

"What lie has she told you?" Nora asked, laying down the pen she had held suspended while listening to Céleste.

She folded her hands and leaned back wearily in her chair. If he must have a scene, as well then as at any other time.

"She told me you were abed,—that you were suffering."

"I have suffered, acutely, in the last two days."

"And yet I find you writing. From the number of ink-covered sheets on your desk, you have been at it for hours."

"I believe I have. Yes,—hours," she answered, abstractedly.

"Too ill to admit me to your room, yet well enough to write for hours on a stretch! Nora, you must think I am a very patient man."

"No, I don't think I ever laid *that* charge at your door."

He had seated himself in a chair on the other side of the table from her. He had wanted to take her in his arms at the moment Céleste's abominable face had disappeared. She had repulsed him gently, but unmistakably. He extended one of his long brown hands now and laid it over hers, as it lay stretched out upon the pile of papers before her. Without any petulant haste, she quietly withdrew hers and locked its fingers in the girdle of her loose wrapper.

John looked baffled and distressed. None of the Lorimer boys were adroit with women. Their experience of the sex had been culled almost exclusively from the staid, well-balanced woman who had held sway over the old mahogany cradle that had rocked them all. He had a vague idea that petulant unreason was a necessary accompaniment to feminine indisposition. Nora was in pain. Hence Nora's incomprehensible conduct.

He withdrew his hand with a disconcerted smile:

"As you please, little woman; but I am sorry for your aches and pains all the same. Can't you think of anything I can do for you?"

"Yes." She fixed him steadily with her large soft eyes. There were black rings under them.

"What is it, Norrie? Anything in the world, dear, that I can do, don't you know I will be glad to do for you?"

"You can go away from me. You can stay away from me—until —until I send for you to come back."

"BY GEORGE! THIS IS PAST ALL REASON!"

"By George! this is past all reason! Sick or well, you have no right to treat me so insultingly."

With the last word his patience seemed completely exhausted. He sprang from his chair, and, with his hands clutching the lapels of his coat rigidly, began a tour of the room that resulted disastrously to all the impediments he encountered.

"Insultingly!"

She repeated the words in a soft, mocking voice, more than once.

"Yes, insultingly." He came back and glared down upon her wrathfully, but she was so small and fragile and tender-looking, that his wrath melted away into a patient, bewildered sort of pity.

"Nora, my little wife! My dear little wife!"

He leaned over the back of her chair. His breath fanned her temples. By the uplifting of one small white finger she might have brought the big fellow to his knees before her.

"Well?" She did not look at him. She lifted no finger towards him. It was an icy acknowledgment that she had heard him: that was all.

"You did not mean it, just now, when you told me that you wanted me to go away from you and stay until you sent for me of your own free will. Did you, Nora?"

"Yes, I meant it."

"And when will you send for me? Is it"—he gave her no time to answer, but touched her soft brown hair with his lips—"because we can't look our prettiest with undressed hair and in our loose wrapper?"

Soft as her answering tones were, there was a ring of concentrated bitterness in them:

"It is because—I—believe I—hate you. Yes, hate you, John. I can't help it: there is no other word for it."

He came around in front of her to see if she was not indulging her childish petulance to a rude excess. There was no childish petulance imprinted upon the small white face before him; instead, a hard passionless gravity which puzzled and alarmed him. He had heard of these nervous complaints disordering a woman's intellect. Perhaps the climate did not agree with his wife. If Chalmers, after examination, said so, he would take her away. He spoke to her soothingly:

"Céleste was a wiser nurse than I took her for. I had no business coming in here to talk to my little sick wife. I am going, Norrie, and I sha'n't come back until you send for me, darling. Only don't keep me away too long. I miss you so, dear. So do all the boys. I wish——"

"Stop! stop! stop!" It was a cry of pain.

He did stop, and stood wonderingly silent while she went on impetuously:

"You are talking to me as if I were a lunatic or a child. A child you know I am not. A lunatic possibly I might become, if falseness, deceit, cowardice, duplicity in a man were all that was necessary to make a lunatic of a woman. When I said that I hated you, I meant it! When I said that I wanted you never to touch me again, I meant it! When I recoiled from your touch as I would from that of a reptile, I meant it! You are a reptile, John Lorimer!"

He blanched at her scathing denunciation of him, and, turning his face from her, he stood with folded arms looking down into the fire. It was on record in the medical journals, he reminded himself, that people frequently turned upon their very dearest friends when dementia seized upon them. Chalmers must be summoned at once. He would not add to her excitement by a single word. She stopped speaking. He could hear the tumultuous breathing that lifted the folds of her white wrapper in billows of passion. After a little while her breath came more placidly.

"Is that all, Nora?" he turned and asked her quietly. To soothe her excited nerves was his one object just then.

"That is all. Is it not enough?"

"Quite enough in the way of condemnation."

He had turned towards the door.

"You are going?" she asked, drearily.

"Is not that what you want me to do?"

"Yes. And you have not one word in self-defence!"

"Not one. You know my theory always has been that the very worst a good woman can think of a man falls far short of his deserving. I hope you will feel better to-morrow, Nora. Try to sleep now, dear."

He was gone! She looked stupidly at the wooden panels of the door through which he had disappeared.

"Not one word in self-defence! He could not look me in the face and defend himself! That much to his credit. And now let me finish my work."

She resumed her writing. Her pen fairly flew over the paper. Sheet after sheet she filled, folded, enveloped, and directed, until four closed envelopes lay before her, upon one only of which she put a government stamp. When Céleste brought her luncheon to the door, she found herself locked out. When she knocked two or three hours later, and informed "Madame" that she was there with the dinner-tray, she was still locked out. When she came again at lamp-light, craving permission to put the child to bed, the door was opened sufficiently wide for Ninette to creep in, and through the crevice Céleste was informed that Mrs. Lorimer would attend to the child herself that night. She was at liberty to dispose of her evening in her own way.

The way Céleste did dispose of it was not at all in "her own way." She was entrapped on her way down the stairs by the mistress of White Cliffs and drawn into the sitting-room, where the family physician, assisted by John Lorimer and his mother, cross-questioned her rigidly and exhaustively as to Mrs. Lorimer's mental condition during previous neuralgic attacks.

She slipped away from them, when they had extracted from her a vast deal of information she had never suspected herself possessed of, and crept into a cot in the hall, just outside Nora's door. John himself had located it. She had assured him confidently that a mouse could not stir in Madame's room and she, Céleste, not hear it from that position.

It was from that night that Céleste Bougereaux always dated her belief in ghosts, and regarded their visitations as presages of evil. She told the story of the White Cliffs ghost always with unction.

"It was not of ghosts I was thinking," she would tell you, "that night. I was awake. I could not sleep. The hall was large and strange to me. The cot was narrow. I was restless. I was thinking of the child Ninette, and how she must have missed me, when of a sudden I felt a cold wave sweep over my face and I saw a white figure gliding noiselessly across the hall and turn towards the steps. I covered my head with the blankets, chilled but not frightened. Céleste Bougereaux is not a coward. When I looked again, there was nothing to be seen but the cold pale moonlight streaming through the uncurtained dormer window upon the bare floor of the hall. The next morning, Mrs. John Lorimer was not to be found. I told no one of that visitation from the White Cliffs ghost. Bah! the provincials,

they would have had no faith in it or in me. But I have seen what I have seen."

One portion of Céleste Bougereaux's story was irrefragable. It was on the morning after she slept on the cot in the hall that John's wife was not to be found. On the desk in her room were lying three sealed envelopes. The fourth one she evidently had taken away with her.

One of the envelopes was addressed to her husband. To him she said,—

"I married you for Ninette's sake, I leave you for your own. You may be a trifle shocked at this violent rending of the feeble chain that links us together, but I fancy you will be infinitely obliged to me in the long run. Consult some of your lawyer friends and see how the knot can be untied legally, for I would not have you lose the full fruits of this sacrifice by reason of obstacles in the path of your marrying again,—more felicitously next time, I will hope. I have no intention of making away with myself."

Another one of the envelopes was addressed to Céleste. To her she said,—

"As soon as you have read this, ask Mr. Lorimer to send you and the child to Glenburnie. Take with you her trunk and the envelope addressed to Miss Fairbanks, which I leave with this. Be good to Ninette, and stay with her: it will be to your interest."

The third envelope was addressed to Miss Fairbanks. To her she said,—

"I am not conducting my project in the way I had planned before coming to White Cliffs. But, after all, we are the merest puppets in the hands of Fate. I had meant my little Ninette should win her own way with you before I made for her the startling claims of kinship. She is Sibley Fairbanks's daughter,—his only child, born in holy wedlock. Her mother and father did not live together happily. He deserted her: she had to make her own support. As all of the papers were in his possession, it may be some time yet before the child's legal claim upon you or upon your father can be established. She is the child of my only sister,—a younger sister, to whom I was idolatrously attached. John Lorimer's suit for my hand carried no weight with it until he accidentally mentioned the fact of having the Fairbanks of Glenburnie as neighbors. I meant to have kept Ninette myself until her claim upon her grandfather had been made so clear that he would gladly have recognized it; but it has been ordered otherwise. If your first impulse should be to order Céleste, the child's nurse, to leave your presence and take the child with her, stop and deliberate twice before you send your brother Sibley's infant daughter adrift in an unfriendly world. Until I procure the proofs of what I say, you must take my simple assertion. Every word in this letter is absolutely true."

CHAPTER IX.

FLOWERS! flowers everywhere! The most expensive sorts at the most expensive season! But expense was never taken into account in the Norcross establishment. Did Mrs. Norcross desire a thing? And was that thing the very best of its kind? Those were the only two questions worth the asking or the answering.

Friday was Mrs. Eugene Norcross's *day*. Not that every day was not entirely at her own frivolous disposal, but even butterflies are subject to exhaustion, and if Mrs. Norcross had not set apart one day out of the seven for "special observances," the gayest butterfly of fashion that all Esplanade Street, in the city of New Orleans, could boast, would have succumbed to the burden of its own popularity.

On Friday, therefore, one was sure of finding Mrs. Norcross at home, clothed in one of those marvels of French costumes that all her "set was raving over." One was also sure of finding the house converted into a bower of roses, while from every corner of the spacious lower floor, during the regulation hours, floated the mingled aroma of English breakfast tea and feminine gossip.

Apparently, no one enjoyed Mrs. Norcross's Friday afternoons more thoroughly than she did herself. No child freshly admitted into fairy-land could have outdone her in joyous gayety, as she flashed from group to group of the tea-drinkers, moving her lithe form with its glistening satin train, and her jewelled arms and hands, with an effective grace not altogether unstudied.

All of those who drank her tea were not good-natured towards Eugene Norcross's young wife. Some of them, perhaps, had not yet got over the secret smart of his defection from the ranks of their own possible suitors. Some of them, perhaps, would have preferred his marrying a woman whom "somebody knew." Among these was his aunt, Mrs. Mellicent Norcross, who confidentially assured his married sister, Mrs. Delancy Delany, on the Friday in question, that—

"If Norcross had not brought her direct from Paris, one would be tempted to accuse her of *gaucherie*."

"Not *gaucherie!* Anything but that. For a woman in her first winter here, she is the most absolutely self-possessed young thing I ever saw."

"Well, then, provincialism, if you prefer. I imagine she has seen very little of this sort of thing. Her enjoyment of it is too undisguised, too absurdly genuine."

"It is rather patent. She is a pretty creature, though, Mellicent. One can scarcely blame Eugene for becoming infatuated so late in life."

"She is exquisite! *Chic* from the crown of her blonde hair to the tips of those little twinkling yellow satin slippers. It is her effusive gayety I condemn. I should prefer more repose of manner."

"Her costume is daring. No woman less sure of her complexion would have ventured so much yellow at once. She does laugh too much."

Mrs. Delancy Delany lowered her long-handled eye-glasses, and sighed. Mrs. Mellicent Norcross lowered hers, and smiled:

"After all, why should she not laugh? Life must be an altogether pleasant thing for her. The adored wife of Eugene Norcross, no children, assured position, old family, wealth, beauty, youth, health! —I envy her, my dear, positively."

"And—yet—a skeleton!"

Mrs. Mellicent shrugged her plump shoulders and lowered her voice:

"You mean Eugene himself?"

"As jealous as a Spaniard!"

"What would you have? Perfection? I imagine her Friday afternoons are free from his espionage only because he knows that no men ever come here before gas-light. He will appear with the lighting of the first jet."

"Doubtless! It is an ugly serpent in this pretty Eden."

"She walks too rapidly. She lacks repose."

Then opportunity for further criticism was lost. Mrs. Norcross was coming towards them, followed by a tray-bearer. She swooped down upon them smiling:

"You are neither eating nor drinking! This is abominable."

"No: we were gossiping, and about you."

"About me?"

She clasped two jewelled hands to her pink ears. The diamonds that flashed upon them were priceless family gems. "It is the left one that burns. You were saying naughty things about me."

"On the contrary. We were saying that Eugene was always a most fortunate man. But—Bennett is trying to catch your eye. He has a card there. One does not need cards to-day."

Mrs. Norcross turned towards the butler, who was standing behind her extending a card and wearing his most impassive facial expression. She flushed under this implication of social ignorance, and made no motion towards taking the card:

"I am at home to all my friends to-day, Bennett."

"This is not a friend, madam. It is a person."

"Then I am not at home to her."

"She insists upon seeing you. She would not go. She has written something on the card. I have shown her into Mr. Norcross's study."

Mrs. Norcross lifted the card from the salver. It was one of the sort Bennett always kept in the drawer of the hall rack for emergencies. There was nothing written on it but a name:

"Nora."

A slight tremor, as slight as the waving of a willow wand when a rude wind shakes it suddenly, passed through her frame, leaving her color a shade fainter, and her voice a trifle less resonant in its gay clear tones:

"Presently."

She waved Bennett out of her presence with that one softly-spoken word, and once more gave her exclusive attention to Mr. Norcross's relatives. She had a favor to ask of both of them:

"IT IS A PERSON."

"Would dear Mrs. Delany come to her on next Monday and dine *en famille?* She and Eugene could not agree upon the location of the conservatory. They needed an umpire. Eugene was positively autocratic."

And

"Would dear Mrs. Norcross make one at the theatre-party she was getting up for Irving's first night?"

Then, with joyous thanks, and an adieu waved from the tips of her pearl-sticked ostrich-feather fan, she turned from them flashing and smiling, and, gradually making her way to the velvet portière that separated the parlors from the rear of the house, she disappeared behind them.

"Wonderful!" Mrs. Delany exclaimed, in tones of genuine ad-

miration, as the velvet draperies fell softly together once more, shutting out the radiant vision.

"What?"

"Amelia's self-control. The card that Bennett brought her agitated her excessively. She had twisted it into a perfect corkscrew before you had made up your mind about the theatre-party. The person is not welcome."

"That, at least, goes then to prove that Eugene did not marry a provincial."

"I yield that point. But one would like to know a little something of the antecedents of one's own brother's wife."

If it had been Mrs. Delany's privilege to go with her sister-in-law into the presence of the person who was patiently waiting in the study, her curiosity might have been amply if not agreeably satisfied on the score of antecedents.

It was John Lorimer's wife who sat there waiting for the tardy coming of her sister Amelia, Ninette's mother. As the radiant young thing who had just successfully run the gantlet of several score of critical eyes flitted into the dimmer region of Mr. Norcross's study, Nora stood up confused and bewildered.

They kissed each other, and they called each other "Norrie" and "Mellie," but, even as their embracing arms fell apart, the look of pain and bewilderment deepening on Mrs. Lorimer's face, she recognized that she was looking at her sister over a yawning abyss.

"I don't understand at all, Amelia! I have been trying to find you for a month. When I heard that you were Mrs. Eugene Norcross, I grew more utterly bewildered than ever. What does it mean? You cannot—have——"

"My letter was explicit enough, heaven knows!" Mrs. Norcross interrupted her rudely, laughed nervously, and settled herself on the other end of Nora's sofa.

"Your letter?"

"Yes,—my letter, in which I told you the whole truth. I thought it would be safest. When I sent Ninette to you and told you I was going to Europe with that old woman as her paid companion, I told you that I could not take Ninette with me, because it was only on the understanding that I had no ties she would have me. She said she wanted no tear-shedding females about her. You knew all that, before."

"Well. I thought no wrong of it, either."

"But I did not tell you the whole truth, Nora. If that old woman had not been Eugene Norcross's mother, and if he had not been going over with her, I never would have taken the position. It all turned out splendidly. The old lady died in Nice. I had seen none of her family, but her son, on this side. I came back Mrs. Eugene Norcross. When I wrote you from Paris that I was going on the stage, it was to prevent you from hunting me up, *ma chère*. I knew your horror of stage people. One cannot hope to succeed in life,—succeed as I have,—" she glanced comprehensively about her,—"if one dare not finesse a little, even with one's own sister. As for the child, she was always much fonder of you than she was of me. I wrote you a long

letter three weeks ago. I told you in that letter that I did not mean Ninette should be a pecuniary burden to you."

Nora put her hand to her head with a distracted gesture:

"I grow more bewildered at every word, Amelia. I never got your letter. I have heard from you but once since the day Céleste came to me with your little girl, bringing the letter telling me you were going to Europe as a companion. That once was when you wrote me you were going on the stage. I cried over that letter, Mellie, and I prayed so hard that you might be kept pure and sweet."

Mrs. Eugene Norcross smiled indulgently:

"A ruse, Norrie, my dear, but a necessary one. I knew your abhorrence of the stage, and I knew, or thought I knew, that if you believed me to be on the stage you would shun me as you would a leper."

"And you wanted me to shun you?"

"Yes."

A cold, hard look had come into the radiant young face.

"I, who have been mother and sister and teacher all in one to you, Mellie? I, who never wanted you even to try to support yourself at type-writing?"

"Yes."

"I, who loved you so dearly, Mellie, that it was only, as I fancied, to get justice done your child that I married John Lorimer after he'd asked me three times?"

"Yes."

It came monotonously from the full red lips which after each utterance Mrs. Norcross drew fiercely in under her glistening white teeth.

"But why?"

"I told you why in that letter."

"But I never got the letter, I tell you."

"Then I will have to go over the whole hateful chapter once more. But not here. This is Mr. Norcross's study, and he might come in unexpectedly."

She got up, almost dragging her sister with her.

"Why should Mr. Norcross *not* find me here?" Nora asked, resentfully. "I have a right to come to see my own sister, have I not, Amelia?"

Amelia made an irritated motion with her pretty hands:

"I have so much to tell you, Nora, and the house is so full of people. You must follow me. Some one might interrupt us."

She dropped her sister's hands, and, sweeping rapidly forward, led the way, by a rear staircase, to the upper floor, never once pausing in her graceful sinuous progress until they reached a small dressing-room, perfect in all its appointments, through the open door of which Nora got a glimpse into a bedroom fitted up with still more Oriental splendor.

"Now! We are safe!—quite safe! Eugene never intrudes here. We can talk comfortably."

She pushed Nora into an easy chair, and, seating herself close beside her, began nervously:

"I am sorry you failed to get that letter. It would have saved you this trip."

"No. I came to the city independently of any expectation of seeing you. I had believed you were on the stage. I had given you up for dead. I placed the child where its proper protectors would be obliged to care for it, and then—then—— But I did not come here to talk about myself. Tell me all that you have kept from me so long, Amelia."

"I am married."

Mrs. Norcross was not looking at her sister now. Her eyes were down-dropt, and she was nervously twisting a heavy gold bangle around on her wrist.

"I see that for myself. When did Sibley Fairbanks die?"

"I don't know."

"Don't know! Don't know! You must know that he *is* dead, Amelia?"

"I don't know. Of course he is dead. Of course I know it. Wretch! deserter! unnatural monster! Was I to wear the willow all my life for a creature who defrauded me into a mock marriage, deserted me and his child,—left us to starve or to worse?"

"But how could you marry another man? How dared you? Did you tell him the whole truth? Mr. Norcross, I mean."

Mrs. Norcross laughed again. There was none of the silvery merriment in the sound that the guests down-stairs had heard before this *person* had intruded like a death's head at her feast. It was a ghastly sort of laugh, and, leaving her seat, she began pacing the narrow dressing-room with long restless strides. Suddenly she turned fiercely on Nora:

"Why did you come here, Nora Hemway? Why did you come here to spoil my beautiful, bright, gay life? The child would never miss me. She did not need me. I heard you had married that stupid John Lorimer and gone away to the country to live, and I was glad."

"Glad, Mellie?"

"Yes, glad! glad! glad! For Eugene Norcross never would have made me his wife, if he had not believed I was absolutely alone in the world. And I wrote to you, throwing myself on your mercy. I told you that my past must be a dead and buried past. I begged you to help me make it so. It was to avoid just such mischances as this that I wrote that letter. I told you all about the money I had put in the bank for the child. You might have let me be happy, Nora. God knows I have suffered enough in the past."

"How can one be happy living a lie, Mellie? How can you be happy without letting him know all about Sibley Fairbanks? You were innocent then, Amelia, but you are guilty here!—horribly guilty."

"Do you want me to kill you, Nora? I feel equal to it,—quite equal to it,—you wretched, puling moralist!"

She stopped in front of her sister, quivering from head to foot with passion. Every vestige of color had fled from her beautiful face, leaving it drawn and ghastly. Her small, jewelled hands were clinched until the pink nails penetrated the soft flesh. As she stood with her back to the chamber door, she looked quite equal to carrying her wild words into execution.

Nora, looking at the wildly-excited creature more in alarm than in anger, became conscious of a third presence. A dark stern face was framed momentarily in the door-way behind Amelia's back, then quickly withdrawn.

"There is some one in there!" she said, huskily, pointing towards the bedroom,—"some one who has heard our talk."

If possible, Amelia's face grew yet paler. She sprang like some beautiful panther towards the open door, then stopped, paralyzed. Her voice sounded husky and feeble:

"Eugene! You here?"

"I am here. Who is your visitor, Mrs. Norcross?"

"A poor sewing-woman."

She had disappeared within the room, and pushed the door after her. It did not close fully upon its hinges. Nora sat still, so absolutely dazed and wretched that it never occurred to her to put herself beyond the reach of the voices in the next room. Where, indeed, in this strange house, should she go?

"You are at home early, Eugene."

It was Amelia's voice. The effort to make it quite natural and soft was pitiably apparent to her sister's tortured ears.

It was not a pleasant voice that answered her:

"Yes, I am at home early. I came home to give my wife some advice." There was a concentration of wrath in the voice that set Nora's heart beating with apprehension.

"Advice for me, Eugene?"

"Yes, Mrs. Norcross, for you." Then followed the rustling of some papers. "The next time you write letters containing secrets touching upon your own immaculate past, be more careful, Mrs. Norcross. Doubtless your own perfumed stationery was inadequate to this bulk, but it was a clumsy mistake to enclose your communication to your 'dear Norrie' in one of my business envelopes. Perhaps you have never noticed the explicit printed directions for its return to Eugene Norcross, 17 Carondelet Street, or perhaps, again, you did not calculate the chances of non-delivery. Such mishaps are unfortunate."

Another silent moment. Then Amelia, in the voice of a frightened child:

"And *that* letter came back to *you?*"

"And *that* letter came back to *me.*"

"And you have read it?"

"And I have read it."

"Then you know everything."

"I know everything."

"What are you going to do?"

In the dreadful silence that followed, Nora's sense of honor pricked her into action. She must put herself beyond the sound of that disgraceful altercation. With her hand upon the knob she paused involuntarily. Eugene Norcross was answering his wife's last question: "What am I going to do about it? By G—d, what I ought to do is—kill you."

"A bully and a coward," said Nora, scornfully, as she closed

the dressing-room door behind her. "But the provocation has been tremendous!"

The chatter of women's voices, the clatter of teacups, and the overpowering scent of tuberoses, floated upward to her as she stood hesitatingly on the landing of the staircase, scarcely knowing how best and quickest to make her escape from this gilded closet with its hideous skeleton. She breathed more freely when she was once more fairly in the street, outside of Amelia's home.

Amelia's home!—she repeated the words bitterly as she hurried down-town towards the dingy boarding-house which she called *her* home.

Coming down to its dreary breakfast-table the next morning, she found the boarders in a state of horrified curiosity, exchanging morning papers from one side the greasy table-cloth to the other.

"What is it?" she asked, languidly, as her nearest table neighbor laid the paper down before her plate.

"Read for yourself! The most perfectly shocking thing anybody ever heard of. And she was so young and so perfectly beautiful. I remember the very last time I saw her driving out towards the Jockey Club, I said to Mr. Miller——"

But Nora was reading for herself. And before what Mrs. Miller said to Mr. Miller was put on record, her head had fallen suddenly forward upon the crumpled morning paper. She had fainted. What she read for herself was simply some hideous staring head-lines:

A FOUL AND MYSTERIOUS MURDER.

ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMEN

IN THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

FOUND DEAD IN HER OWN LIBRARY.

ONE OF OUR WEALTHIEST MEN, EUGENE NORCROSS,

SAID TO BE ALMOST INSANE

OVER THE DEATH

OF HIS

LOVELY YOUNG WIFE.

CHAPTER X.

"THE Norcross affair," as it had come to be called with the brutal flippancy of the newspapers, was ten days old. The wonder and the horror of it all were on the wane for every one but those immediately connected with it, and for the detectives, whose professional pride and pecuniary interests were involved in the solution of a mystery which threatened to prove insoluble.

It was becoming difficult for the most enterprising of reporters to glean fresh items concerning it for the columns of his especial daily. The freshest were—

That "Eugene Norcross proposed going to Europe for an extended tour of the Continent. Might perhaps be gone years."

That "Eugene Norcross had offered a reward of five thousand dollars for the apprehension of the murderer or murderers."

That "The detectives were on the trail of an unknown woman who had been admitted to the house on the fatal Friday of the murder."

That "Mr. Norcross had preserved the strictest silence on the subject, remained closely confined to the house in Esplanade Street, and sternly refused to be interviewed. No papers were permitted in the house."

Into this gloom-wrapped isolation a visitor penetrated late one afternoon, and was announced to his master by Bennett, in a startled undertone:

"A person for you, sir. The same, I think, that was in the dressing-room *that* day."

The study was so dark that the butler could just discern the tall dark form in the big chair by the writing-table. He added a personal apology:

"I was listening for your bell, sir. Sha'n't I light up?"

There was a restless movement in the big chair, the sound of a hand brought heavily down among the loose litter of the writing-table, then a curt command:

"Light up! Let her come in. Leave. And see to it that there is no listening among the maids."

As the gas-jet sprang into existence, Eugene Norcross, looking across Bennett's shoulder, saw a sad white face framed about with a plain black bonnet. Its owner's eyes were fixed upon him searchingly. Evidently she had planned her approach. If she had hoped to surprise any evidence of guilt upon the stern, handsome, haggard face opposite her, she was disappointed. He met her intense gaze with one equally intense. His calmness remained absolute, his whole attitude one of unflinching fortitude.

That he had suffered at all could only be conjectured from the

black rings under his eyes, and a certain pinched look about his fine thin nostrils.

The habits of a lifetime are not easily forgotten. There was a woman standing while he was seated. He rose, waved her to a seat, staggered from physical exhaustion, laid one long brown hand resolutely on the back of his chair, and waited for Bennett to close the outer door of the library after him. He spoke first.

EVIDENTLY SHE HAD PLANNED HER APPROACH.

"You have taken a daring step. Do you know what you are suspected of? Are you not afraid of arrest?"

She looked him composedly over from head to foot. A shudder ran through her slight frame as she tightened her clasp of a roll of newspapers she held.

"No," she said, "I am not afraid of arrest. That was what I came here to say. It was a daring step for you to take."

"I do not understand."

"But it was in keeping. The man who could murder one woman might readily seek to throw suspicion upon another one."

He was visibly trembling: was it from physical weakness? She had refused to be seated, and he had remained standing. He dropped heavily into his chair, as that slight frail woman hurled the monstrous accusation at him, in a voice which, though perfectly under control, was fierce in its intense emotion. She misread his agitation:

"I do not wonder that you tremble. The man who could take a woman's life, who could clasp his brutal hands around her slim white throat and keep them there while her strong young life-current ebbed out forever, is just the sort of man to pale and tremble at fear of detection. Brute! Cowardly brute that you are! I would have denounced you publicly at once, but I thought, No! they will drag my poor

Mellie from the grave, his rich friends, and they will buy him off from justice at any price. They will parade all of her weakness and her folly to the world! They will blacken her memory, as he, as you, Eugene Norcross, blackened the soft smooth white skin of her pretty neck. My poor little Mellie! My pretty, foolish butterfly!"

"Great God! this is horrible!—too horrible to stand!"

His eyes blazed like living coals. His arched black brows came together in a fierce contraction. The solid chair shook under him. She echoed him sternly:

"Horrible! too horrible! I agree with you. Was it not enough to put her out of the way, she so slight and weak and helpless, you so strong, without involving me? It must have been absurdly easy."

"What?" he asked, stupidly.

"To choke her. I could have done it myself."

THE SOLID CHAIR SHOOK UNDER HIM.

He pushed the damp masses of hair back from his forehead with both hands. It was almost a gesture of despair. How could he silence this woman? How rid himself of her? He could ring for Bennett and send for an officer; but she claimed to be Amelia's sister. It was with the hope of enlightenment that he had consented to see her. He listened as in a dream to her cruelly composed voice:

"But it would have done no good to denounce you. You were too rich and powerful. Though I might have sworn to your guilt on God's holy Bible, who would have believed me? You would have gone scot-free, after my poor Mellie's name had been dragged through the mire. That was why I let you be, until—" she flung the roll of papers down on the table before him—"I found that in the morning papers. It was a daring step to take."

By a superhuman exercise of that will-power which had never failed him in the hour of his need, Eugene Norcross mastered his violent agitation. He looked at the slight, frail woman who had just arraigned him so fiercely, with eyes from which the blazing wrath had died out, leaving instead intense sadness and commiseration for his fellow-sufferer.

There was that on this woman's sad, sweet face that stamped her kinship to his dead wife. Amelia had lied to him, had betrayed his

absolute trust in her frivolously and cruelly. But she was gone, and this woman was sorrowing for her. Could he not bear with her a little while?

"And—so—you are her sister?" he said, almost gently.

"Yes. Her only sister. Her only relative."

"And you are——"

"The 'Nora' to whom she wrote that fatal letter."

"Why do you call it 'that fatal letter'?"

She looked at him with loathing. He was lighting a cigar! The table in front of him was strewn with dead stumps. She had no means of knowing that it was his sedative,—the one thing that had kept his brain in working order during the fierce ordeal of the past ten days.

"Why do I call it that fatal letter? Because it caused my sister's death. Your callousness is monstrous, Eugene Norcross!"

"You are absolutely saturated with an insane idea. I see what you mean, but it is not clear to me how you got your wild impression."

"I was in the dressing-room that day."

"Well?"

"And I heard you tell her, after telling her about the letter coming back to you, that what you ought to do was——"

He put up a hand imploringly:

"I know! I know! I frightened the poor child! A man, unless he is more saint than man, does not suddenly make the discovery that he has been lied to, duped, entrapped, by a creature whom he has regarded as almost flawless, without being temporarily thrown off his balance. If you never saw that letter, you do not know how monstrously I had been deceived."

"Yes, I do know it. It was all wrong. I had been telling her so. She had no right to marry you. But could you not have put her away from you in some other fashion? This is such a great big roomy world."

"By God, I believe you are a lunatic! I loved my wife! I tried to treat her as I supposed a woman liked to be treated. I was not young when I married her; I was not skilled with woman-kind; but I believe she was happy,—yes, I do believe she was content. I gave her everything she wanted."

"And took from her the thing she loved best of all,—her life."

"Your dreary insistence makes it hard to be patient with you. If I were a guilty man, I should regard you as my Nemesis. I did not kill Amelia. I am not that sort of brute. You *must* believe me."

"Who did, then?" In spite of herself, she was almost persuaded.

"I do not know. I have offered five thousand dollars for the answer to that question."

"I heard you say that you ought to kill her. That night she was killed. Oh, the horror of it maddens me."

"A pretty piece of circumstantial evidence, I admit. Yes, your memory is correct: I did tell her that 'I ought to kill her;' but it is not on record that Eugene Norcross ever did the thing he ought to do."

Then, in less offensively defiant tones, perhaps in commiseration for the great anguish in the sweet white face before him, he added,—

"She went away from me! Thank God, the last words she ever heard me say were in apology for that brutal outbreak. I had never spoken angrily to her before. I had never had occasion to do so. I believed in her utterly and entirely. Yes, she went away from me and returned to the women down-stairs. I could hear her voice above every other one, the gayest, clearest one there, as I went out of the house again. I dined at the club-house that day. I wanted time to think the whole miserable business over fully before I met her again. I was afraid I might forget that I was a gentleman and she a woman: false, damnably untruthful, but yet a woman. Nothing would be easier than for me to prove an alibi if need be. I did not care for my own company that evening. I picked two club-men up on leaving the house, drove them to the club, dined with them, played whist with them, until—until—a messenger—Bennett, I believe it was—came to the club and informed me that when Mrs. Norcross's maid, surprised at her mistress's not ringing for her at bedtime, went to look her up, she found her—as you know. You are her sister, and you are entitled to this much."

He stopped talking, and, reaching forward to a decanter on the table, poured out a large wineglassful of madeira, which he drank off at a gulp. Nora's eyes had never once left his face while he was talking.

"You believe me, do you not?" he asked, leaning wearily back in his chair, and drawing his handkerchief slowly across his lips.

"You have left me no choice. I must believe you. I do."

"This is the first and the only statement I shall make on the subject. I have offered the reward, as I told you before. In a few days I leave for Europe. There is one thing I should like to do. Before you came, it looked impossible."

She looked at him inquiringly. What a strange turn things had taken! He began again, in a broken voice:

"In that—letter—she spoke of a child. I should like to know that it would not become a pauper,—would never know the need which sometimes drives women to deceive men. If you will help me—I do not know its name. There were no names mentioned. She only spoke of her little girl. By that I knew she was a widow."

"There is no need for that. The child will be well cared for. But it is generous of you."

She put out her hand to him impulsively. Perhaps, after all, he had been more sinned against than sinning. He took the proffered hand:

"Thank you. I am glad, after all, that I have been able to rid your mind of that hideous fancy, before I leave the country. It might have looked like a flight. And I don't know but what it is. Life, here, is intolerable,—will be everywhere, in fact."

"And you have no theory? It was not a suicide?" she asked.

"No. Of that I am quite sure. She was too timid, and not miserable enough, by half! I *had* a theory,—the same one the detectives seem to have hit upon."

He pointed to the papers she had thrown on his table.

"You mean the strange plainly-dressed woman who was admitted to Mrs. Norcross in the afternoon, and who, according to the papers, 'stole out by a side-entrance, evidently shunning observation.' That was I."

"So I presumed. That was why I said I *had* a theory. I have none now."

"Nor any clue whatever?"

"None. Unless"—he opened a drawer of the writing-table and took from it a small pasteboard box—"this may eventually prove to be one." He extended it, unopened, to Nora Lorimer. "It was found clasped in one of her hands. But she had so many trinkets and baubles that I lay no stress upon it,—scarcely know how to connect it with the crime."

Nora drew from the box with trembling fingers a broken piece of a gold chain. Attached to it was a seal of some clear translucent stone. An intaglio with a device which it was not easy to read at a first glance marked it. It was such a seal as years before had been used for impressing the wax on letters. It was large, and not particularly fine in workmanship. She felt quite sure it had not been among Amelia's few possessions in her girlhood; nor was it such a seal as the wealthy Mrs. Norcross would have been likely to purchase. Moreover, seals were not in fashionable demand just then.

"May I keep this, Mr. Norcross?" she asked, replacing the possible clue in the box. She had studied it carefully.

He was leaning back in his chair, with closed eyes. His face was worn and haggard. He waved his hand in consent, sat up presently, and held out his hand to her:

"I believe I must ask you to cut this interview short. It has been more trying than I anticipated. We have exonerated each other, but intensified the mystery. Perhaps time will solve it; perhaps we will never know until——"

"She solves the mystery for us herself, over there," said Nora, turning away from Amelia's husband and the darkened home which would never again resound to the chatter of gay voices or be converted into a bower of roses.

As she passed out into the lamp-lighted streets, she repeated his words with a sense of absolute powerlessness:

"We have exonerated each other, but intensified the mystery."

She melted some wax as soon as she got back to her room, and made a succession of impressions with the seal she had brought away with her until the design was fully revealed. The result was disappointing.

She had hoped for a monogram, at least an initial, by way of clue. There stared her in the face, instead, a dozen more or less perfect waxen effigies of a "martlet," an absurd bird with abbreviated legs and wings. She held it close to the light to examine it minutely:

"Not at all pretty. Therefore it must mean something."

CHAPTER XI.

"NORCROSS, I see, has got off."

"Yes, poor devil, he has got *off*."

The emphasis was too significant to pass unnoticed. The speaker who had just found Eugene Norcross's name in the passenger-list of an outgoing steamer laid the paper across his knee to stare at the other one. They were both club-men. One of them was called the Cynic: his real name was McKenzie.

"What do you mean, McKenzie?"

"Nothing. I never by any oversight tax my utterances with a meaning."

"Yes, but, by Jove, the remarkable emphasis you put on the word *off* is equal to an indictment."

The Cynic shifted his position carelessly, bringing into his line of vision a small table at which two men sat, with a bottle of wine between them.

"There is an improving spectacle. It is enough to make a good Universalist of a Digger Indian to see such harmony. Hereafter I will make no doubt that everybody will eventually be saved and occupy the same mansion of the blest."

"What is your interesting tableau? I can't turn round and stare without beastly rudeness."

"Two men hobnobbing over a bottle of wine, who according to all precedent ought to be at each other's throats, bull-dog fashion. They are being false to their traditions,—not conducting the family feud properly."

This was too much for the polite man. He risked "beastly rudeness," squared himself in his deep leather chair sufficiently to take in the alcove and its occupants, and said, in a disappointed tone,—

"Oh! Lorimer and Fairbanks. What's the matter with them? Why, they're a regular Damon and Pythias, Castor and Pollux, or any other of the immortal inseparables you choose. One never comes to the club but the other is sure to follow."

The Cynic brought his eye-glass deliberately to bear on the men in the alcove: "Fairbanks is a superb-looking fellow! But what about the vendetta?"

"A rubbishy piece of inherited lumber, which those youngsters seem inclined to relegate to memory's attic,—a proof of common sense to which I take off my hat."

"But the vendetta?"

"Oh, yes. Well, I got the history of it from my grandfather, who at one time owned a plantation between the belligerents. It began with the shooting of a bull. Fairbanks shot Lorimer's bull, or Lorimer shot Fairbanks's bull. Doubtless my grandfather transmitted the gory legend correctly to me, but my villanous memory has refused

to retain it. I confess to a certain confusion as to the original ownership of the bull whose horns have been as the horns of a very serious dilemma to all the succeeding Lorimers and Fairbanks."

"Gammon!"

"Gospel truth. Of course there was a row over that bull, but I believe his is the only gore that stains the scutcheons of two proud families."

"Be serious for once, McKenzie."

"Serious as a sexton, 'pon honor! My veneration for family feuds forbids levity. In the succeeding generation, tradition hath it, there were a boy and a girl of the two households madly in love with each other,—perhaps the father and the mother of this identical pair. Doubtless by that time the *casus belli*—or *bulli*, if you will permit a vile pun—began to look a trifle shrivelled: so an imaginary grievance of more respectable origin was manufactured. Years of bad blood had not improved the temper of either family. Consequently, row number two: hands parted, hopes blighted, and all that sort of thing. I have the satisfaction of feeling that I have helped the thing along somewhat in modern times."

"Satisfaction!"

"Unquestionably. When people have been quarrelling over a dead bull half a century after the buzzards have done with it, it is a source of satisfaction to feel instrumental in furnishing fresh material for their ammunition. I wanted to sell out my place up there. I was wedged in between the two places of these mortal foes. I reaped a golden harvest from their idiocy. They bid against each other in the most reckless fashion. The result,—I have been made comfortable for life. Fairbanks ruined himself buying the property, which has enabled him to impinge closer and closer upon the neighboring place. The Lorimers have nearly ruined themselves in law-suits about boundaries, and the bones of the poor old vendetta are rattled more feebly as each year goes by. But *noblesse oblige*, you know. Ta-ta. I promised my daughter a drive in the Park this afternoon."

"And I must be going too."

The long reading-room was deserted by every one but the two men in the alcove. But for the full hour they had been sitting there, shielded from close surveillance by their position in the embrasure of the bay-window, they had seemingly been oblivious of the coming and going of the other men. They had come together with a more earnest purpose, perhaps, than any of the men who sauntered in and out, smoking, reading, gossiping, idling the hours away, waiting for dinner-time.

At the beginning of the interview the younger man had said,—

"I told you, Fairbanks, that I would not trouble you again until I had something of importance to communicate. I received a letter this morning which I think you ought to see."

"From whom?"

"Miss Fairbanks." He took the letter from his pocket, but seemed loath to part with it. "It is not a pleasant letter, but I felt I could not answer it before seeing you."

A wintry smile passed over Fairbanks's face:

"Don't hesitate because of its unpleasantness, Lorimer. I am not easily floored nowadays."

"Fairbanks, were you ever married?"

The question was asked so suddenly, and was in itself, seemingly, so totally inconsequential, that for a second Fairbanks quailed perceptibly. Then his blue eyes flashed fire:

"What in the devil has that to do with our business? I promised to help you to bring two obstinate old people to a sense of what they owe others. I felt sorry for Ida. But I *did not* agree to turn my own private affairs inside out for your entertainment, Mr. Lorimer."

"Forgive me," said Dennis, as gently as a woman could have said it, "but there's a fresh snarl in affairs, and I am more bewildered than ever. My life, my usefulness, all that makes existence worth having, Fairbanks, is being sapped by this suspense. I wish I had told your sister the whole truth before I left White Cliffs; for she had been nursing a wrong impression ever since the day her father found us together in the summer-house and ordered me off the premises. She thought I was frightened off by him. She refused to come to see me when I was up there skulking around the place like a whipped cur, until I sent her word by John that I could give her some information about you. Then she came, God bless her, through the darkness, over the rough wild bayou path, and flooded my life for one blessed hour with sunshine. She loves me, Sibley; she tells me she would marry me and come away with me, but for leaving her father so helpless and alone. She thinks you ought to come home and lift that burden from her shoulders, Fairbanks; and, by heaven, so do I. There is too much at stake here for her and for me, for me to stand on a point of etiquette with you. I have already given up home and mother for her. She is ready to give up home and father for me. I dared not even go near White Cliffs; for mother, stern, unbending saint that she is, swore that she would never see or speak to me until I came to her and told her that I had given up all desire to marry Ida Fairbanks. That I never will do,—never, by all that is sacred.

"I can support her myself, Sibley. Thank heaven, I've gained in brain and muscle since climbing out of the old rut, and we can be happy before we grow old and tired, if you will only do your part and set Ida free. That is,"—he touched the letter with one finger,—"if this doesn't put a fresh stumbling-block in our way."

Fairbanks made a gesture of impatience.

"We have gone over all this ground before, Lorimer, and, I had hoped, for the last time. That I left Glenburnie in a fit of temper there is no denying. Father simply grew unbearable in his tyranny. I believed, however, that after I came away he would renounce that brainless vow of his, and resume his proper place as head of his estate. I heard from you the very first I have ever known of Ida's hardships. I wrote three letters to him, and one to her. When they all came back to me with unbroken seals, I gave it up. I told you the other night that I had something to do in town that must be settled; after it was settled I would return to Glenburnie and take charge of

the place. Then you and Ida, my boy, may marry and laugh the old vendetta into the grave while you are both still young."

"That is as I had hoped and planned too; but read that, Sibley."

He drew the letter from its envelope, and, flinging it across the table, sat moodily toying with the empty envelope. On the flap of it was the broken impress of *a martlet.*

Sibley Fairbanks read the letter flung across the table to him once rapidly, then more slowly, and, as he read, the bewildered contraction of his brows grew more and more decided. Finally he looked confusedly across at Dennis.

"Do I understand that my child, Ninette Fairbanks, was taken to Glenburnie by her aunt, your brother John Lorimer's wife?"

"So it seems."

"And her mother? The whole thing is so mixed."

"Cursedly so," said Dennis, hotly, "and unless you can unravel it no one else can, Sibley. It is an infernal complication, invented to perpetuate an old worn-out feud, and to keep Ida and myself apart."

"I don't see it that way. Perhaps I am growing stupid about the whole business."

Dennis Lorimer leaned towards him beseechingly:

"Fairbanks, for God's sake tell me the absolute, the entire truth. Was the woman who married my brother John the mother of that child? Don't you—can't you see how black it all looks?"

For a second Sibley Fairbanks looked as if he were ready to return to the family traditions and throttle this slight boyish Lorimer in front of him. Then he answered him with such fierce earnestness that there was no doubting his impetuous statement:

"What sort of a foul fiend do you take me for, Lorimer? When you asked me if I had ever been married, I quailed, because my married life was such a miserable failure. I tumbled into love with a beautiful but absolutely heartless woman within three months after leaving home. I had about a thousand dollars then, from the sale of my riding-horses. We got along smoothly enough while that lasted. When it was all gone,—when——bah! there's no necessity for washing one's soiled linen in public—I went off to look for work. I wrote back regularly enough. But——well, I got back here about a year ago, heard my wife had gone to Europe, traced her as far as the steamer,—no farther. Up to the moment you showed me that letter of Ida's, I had been unable to discover the whereabouts of my little girl. That was what I was staying here for."

"And John's wife?"

"Must have been Amelia's sister. There was a Nora Hemway. I received one letter from Amelia, after my departure, in which she told me she had taken steps to have our marriage set aside on the ground of desertion. She was wilful and passionate, and my failure to support her gave her ample opportunity, under our lax laws, of accomplishing her end. Thank God, my little Ninette is safe." He broke off petulantly:

"What are you looking at me that way for, Lorimer? Have I said anything particularly nauseous? I never posed for a saint."

Dennis answered him absently: "Did you not say that her sister's name was Nora Hemway?"

"I did."

"Have you followed the papers on the Norcross affair, Fairbanks?"

"I have not."

Lorimer called a waiter and ordered the week's file of papers brought. Both men were silent while waiting for its coming. Dennis was idly clipping the edges of the wax impression on Ida Fairbanks's envelope.

Fairbanks, as idly watching the operation, said, by way of breaking an incomprehensibly awkward pause,—

"I see Ida still makes use of the old seal. What an old-fashioned girl she is!"

"Is this the Fairbanks seal?" Dennis asked, dully. "I could not make anything out of it but a short-legged bird. I supposed it was a woman's fancy."

"It is a martlet. In heraldry it defines the position of its owner as a younger son. They must take their flights on clipped wings,

"READ THAT."

climb on short legs. Father's forefather was a younger son. Yes, it is the old family seal. The men of the family all have used it."

The file of newspapers was placed before them just then, and Dennis Lorimer began fluttering the unwieldy leaves with nervous haste.

"Read that," he said, curtly, putting his finger on a paragraph and pushing it towards his companion.

"The chief of detectives confesses himself absolutely baffled in

every effort at unravelling the Norcross affair. The last clue has failed them. The woman who was admitted to the house by the butler on that Friday afternoon turns out to have been a sister of Mrs. Amelia Norcross's, and fondly devoted to her. Her name has not been revealed, but the butler says she wrote the one word Nora on the card she sent in to his mistress on that fatal afternoon. This explodes the theory of her possible guilt."

"There might have been a thousand Noras calling on their sisters that Friday," said Sibley Fairbanks, crushing the file of papers savagely between his strong hands. "But it opens up a ghastly possibility." After a long pause, "Lorimer!"

"Well?"

"If it is so,—if that is the end,—then may God be merciful to us all."

"And bring the truth to light," Dennis added, in a solemn undertone, gazing fixedly at his companion.

CHAPTER XII.

LORIMER LORIMER, the gentlest of men, whose very gentleness had rendered his subjugation to a woman of narrow vision and unbending will fatally easy, had positively lashed himself up to the point of "having a row with John if need be;" and instead they had fallen to discussing the dreariness of things generally with mutual good-natured sympathy.

"Did you hear what mother said this morning, John?"

"Yes. Five helpless boys and an old woman dying. Which was putting it harshly. She is not dying."

"Did you hear what she added?"

"No. I went out of the room just then. It took all the man out of me, to see mother, always so strong and clear-headed, lying there with that pinched white face, babbling nonsense."

"Her head is as clear as yours or mine. She said, remorsefully, 'I wish I had not hugged that silly old grievance to my heart so long. My Dennis, at least, might have been happy, instead of a homeless wanderer the Lord knows where. So many people need not have suffered. It looks so small and empty *now*,—the feud.'"

"Have you told her that Dick and Rafe have gone to fetch Dennis home,—at least to look for him?"

"No. I did not care to excite her. I told her I was obliged to send them to the city in my stead, but that I was looking for them back to-morrow. That is all she knows."

"But we've got away from the subject I started out to exhaust, John. I want you to hunt your wife up. I want you to pull yourself together and get out of this worn-out old rut. We want no more tabby-cats in the family."

"Wait, Lorrie! Not now!"

"I did not mean just now."

A sombre silence fell between them. Then Lorrie said, in his gentle voice,—

"I think I will go in to mother, now."

He left John sitting there alone, staring listlessly out over the sunlit world. The dogs lay asleep in various spots out there under the big trees. The guns were all stacked in the corner of the green-tinted hall. A solemn stillness pervaded White Cliffs, in-doors and out. The harsh creaking of the big front gate on its new wooden hinges made John turn his gloomy face in that direction. The next moment he was on his feet with a muttered exclamation of amazement.

Ida Fairbanks, accompanied by Stepniak, her Danish hound, who walked on one side of her with dignified self-possession, and by Ninette, whose methods of progression suffered severely by comparison with Stepniak's, was coming towards him.

Amazement swallowed up every other sensation in John Lorimer's breast, but he was conscious of an uncontrollable physical repulsion as Ninette, running swiftly in advance of her companions, seized his hands and put up her small red mouth with an imperious demand:

"Kiss me, Uncle John. I ain't come back here to live. My aunt Ida says my papa is——" But Ida drew her backward.

"Ninette, you and Stepniak are to sit just here." She halted at the lowest step and waited for Ninette to arrange herself and her short draperies to her own entire satisfaction.

"I could not leave her behind," she said, apologizing to the shuddering dislike in John's eyes, "because I have sent the woman Céleste away, and no one else can control the child. I had to come. I heard that Mrs. Lorimer was ill, and I thought—ah! I hope she will not say I may not come in. Life is so short, and so full of the anguish we neither make nor can unmake for ourselves, that everything else seems so pitifully small. It is monstrous!"

"I will tell my mother that you are here," said John, looking at her, as if he only half comprehended the meaning of her presence or of what she said. He turned mechanically towards the front door. Ida put out a detaining hand:

"Not just yet, please. I have something I want to say to you. It may amount to nothing, but still I think you ought to hear it. I have sent Céleste away."

"So I heard you say," John answered, coldly. What was that child, sitting on the low stone steps with her dimpled white arms clasped about Stepniak's neck, while she "whispered secrets" into his long silky ears, but a thorn in his flesh, a reminder of his miserable matrimonial defeat? Why should the dismissal of her *bonne* be reported to him?

"Yes; I had to send her away." Ida stood before him, twisting her

hat-ribbons about nervously, as confused and tremulous as a snared bird.

John Lorimer looked at her with polite attention.

"Oh, it is nothing but cowardice that makes it so hard for me to repeat her vile threats. And yet you ought to know. Perhaps you can find a meaning to them that I cannot."

"You are agitated, Miss Fairbanks. Pray be seated."

He brought a chair, but she waved it aside and plunged into her story with impetuous earnestness:

"I was agitated. I feel calmer now. It is not easy to repeat such miserable things. When Céleste found that she had lost her place she railed out at me with a tempest of insulting words. Some things she said seemed to throw some light on—on——"

"Mrs. Lorimer's flight?" John asked, steadily.

"Yes. That is why I am here. She came into my room after her box was gone, and, standing before me, with her bad, bad face working with passion, fairly shrieked into my face, 'I am not done with the Fairbanks yet. I have loved and hated them by turns, and the good Lord has put it in my power to hurt every one of them. You pass for a saint; no one but Céleste Bougereaux knows that it was' because of you that John Lorimer's poor young wife was driven to despair. It was I, the despised Céleste, not he, the man who had sworn to love and protect her, nor you, the saint who can do no harm, that received her back wet and shivering and heart-broken that night,—the night that——' Then she broke off with that fiendish laugh that always made me shudder, adding, 'Ah, well, that will keep until I have use for it. Céleste Bougereaux has a storehouse for family secrets. It is very full, but there is room for a few more.' Then she rushed from the room; but as Cato was driving her from the door I could hear that hideous laugh of hers."

John looked at her uncomprehendingly. There was no more to tell, apparently. She stood before him flushed and silent.

"Well? I always knew that the woman was a devil. I wondered at Mrs.——at the child's aunt employing her. I suppose she had her own reasons for it. But what are her ravings to you, or to me?"

"By themselves, perhaps, nothing; but one link discovers another. Do you remember, Mr. Lorimer, the evening you were so good as to take me to old Isham's cabin to meet Dennis, my husband that is to be?"

"Perfectly."

A wintry smile flitted over his grave face, she had raised her young head with such a proud gesture of defiance as she asked the question.

"Something strange happened the next morning. It meant nothing at all to me, until after Céleste's outburst. Old Isham came to me with a five-dollar gold piece in his hand, and asked me if I hadn't 'made a mistake.' When I told him I did not know what he was talking about, he said, 'Missy, didn't you think you was giving me a quarter for seeing you 'cross Dry Bayou, 'stead of which you give me this?' When I told him he must be dreaming, that I had never given

him anything, he said, 'Missy, you needn't be 'fraid old Isham would tell on you.'"

John Lorimer made a gesture of impatience. Why should he be called on to sift the utterances of an infuriated French nursery-maid and an imbecile old negro, to find the clue to his own misery? The best of women were so prolix.

"Well?"

"Don't you see? Can't you see?" Ida asked, impatiently.

"See what?"

"That the poor little thing made a mistake! How she must have suffered, Mr. Lorimer! Perhaps," she went on, blushing entrancingly, "she may have seen you piloting me through the briers and the gullies that night. Perhaps she got it into her poor little bewildered head that —don't you see?—that you cared for me, the wrong way. If she had known me"—with a proud flush on her pure young face—"she could never have fallen into such a hideous error. But, ah, how she must have suffered! Tell me where she is, that I may make haste to beg her pardon for my ignorant share in her wretchedness."

"Do I understand—am I to understand that my wife knew of your visit to the dry bayou to see Dennis?"

"I DO NOT KNOW WHERE SHE IS."

"But what else? Why should she have come back to the house broken-hearted? Who was it that old Isham piloted home in the dark?"

"By Jove, it was shabby treatment of me!"

There was scarcely any uplifting of the shadows. If Nora had stooped to play the spy on his movements, if she had so little trust in him as all that, what had he to hope for?

"I want to write to her, Mr. Lorimer," Ida said, insistently.

"I do not know where she is."

"Then you must find out. If you do not, I will." She said it with that imperious air of self-assertion which always had a quelling effect even upon her father.

Now that the whole ugly story was out, she put from her all sense of the indignity that had fallen to her own share, and was bent only on the high mission of the peacemaker. Lifting her brave eyes defiantly to John's, she became aware of Lorrie's pale worn face framed in the open door-way. There was a look of irrepressible wonder in his eyes. She went towards him with outstretched hands.

"You are wondering what I am doing here. I want to be her nurse. I want her to know about Dennis and me. She thinks we have given each other up. I would feel like a coward marrying him, as I mean to do some of these days, but hiding it from her. This is no time for nursing groundless animosities. Can't you make her feel so?"

"Something strange happened just now, in there," said Lorimer, pointing to the closed shutters of his mother's room. "I think perhaps your voice must have penetrated her dreams, but I did not hear it. Mother opened her eyes,—there were tears in them,—she looked all about the room with disappointed eyes before she said, 'Son, I dreamed just now that I had a daughter. I could hear her voice,—it was very sweet,—and the touch of her hand on my forehead was very soft and pleasant. I wish I had one, son, one who would be good to my helpless clumsy boys when I am gone.' Then she closed her eyes and dozed off again."

"She is waiting for me," said Ida, with a sweet shy upward look at the tall fellow in front of her. "Go and tell her that I am here, please."

Lorimer came back from his errand with a luminous smile. "Come. Truly she is waiting for you."

He left the two women together, and came out to where John still sat moveless. Ninette and Stepniak had fallen asleep in the slumberous sunshine,—she with her bright curls falling over his shaggy eyebrows, he with one huge paw outstretched protectingly upon her short skirts.

"John," said Lorimer, in a voice of intense feeling, "what is the promise made to the peacemakers?"

"They shall see God."

"Then that radiant vision will dawn for Ida Fairbanks. Mother has found a daughter."

"And perhaps—" John looked at him with a face that shone with the recovered light of hope—"I have found—my wife."

Then he told Lorrie all that Ida had told him.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN Miss Fairbanks finally turned her steps towards Glenburnie again, she did it with such unprecedented briskness that Ninette, holding tight by one of her slim fingers, as she swayed helplessly over the uneven ground, was moved to protest:

"What is you running for, auntie? My legs is too short."

Ida slackened her pace, stooped to kiss the child impulsively, and answered, enigmatically,—

"Poor little martlet! I am not running, niece Ninette. I am just trying my new wings. I want to see how it feels to flutter them outside of prison-bars. My emancipation proclamation goes into effect from to-day, Miss Ninette Fairbanks!"

Ninette had dropped her hand and circled gravely twice around her before responding, querulously, "But I can't see them?"

"See what?"

"Your new wings."

Whereupon Ida laughed so long and so gayly that Ninette, applying her own little narrow gauge to this unwonted flow of spirits, asked,—

"Is somebody given you something nice, auntie?"

"No, niece Ninette, but I have been brushing the cobwebs from the sky, and it is good to see the sunlight of truth once more."

"Oh, I know now!" The light of intelligence broke suddenly over the puzzled baby face. "Mother Goose!"

"Precisely," said Ida, accommodating herself to the tender little feet and rhythmically supplying the context:

"There was an old woman,
Tossed up in a blanket,
Seventeen times as high as the moon;
What she did there
I cannot tell you,
But in her hand she carried a broom.
Old woman, old woman,
Old woman, said I,
Oh, whither, oh, whither, oh, whither so high?
To sweep the cobwebs off the sky,
And I'll be back again by and by."

It was so deliciously easy to be nonsensical that day!

"But you'll come back, auntie, by and by?" There was a touch of anxiety in the ignorant little voice.

"I will never get so very far away from you, my darling, my little sunbeam, my salvation!"

They had reached the front door of their own home by this time. Ida handed the child promptly over to old Dido, who was her abject serf. Then she turned towards the stairway, alone.

"IS SOMEBODY GIVEN YOU SOMETHING NICE, AUNTIE?"

"I have found out all I want to know, Dido."

Dido looked into the illumined young face before her with a new respect. She had lifted the veil heavy with the dust of half a century.

"Well, my chil'?"

"Rubbish!" Ida snapped her fingers airily. "I'm disgusted to think how much veneration I have wasted on it all these years. And, Dido, I am going to have a plain talk with father to-day. I wanted to know the whole truth first. After to-day you sha'n't hide our dear little girl away in that gloomy old wing any longer. I'm going to sweep the cobwebs out of father's brain next."

"Not much hardship in the wing," said old Dido, not altogether relishing the iconoclastic spirit that was invading Glenburnie. Things that had remained solid so long must have some inherent strength in them,—the vendetta among them. She was almost too old to adjust herself to a livelier order of things.

"I tell you what it is, missy——"

But Ida's skirts were just disappearing around the last curve in the spiral staircase. She had gone to sweep the cobwebs from her *father's* brain, to flutter her new wings defiantly in his presence. She

found him impatiently arranging the chess-men on the board. He consulted his watch before acknowledging her cheerful greeting:

"You are outgrowing the old-fashioned virtue of punctuality, Ida, I am sorry to see."

"I am outgrowing a great many other things, father, I am glad to say, but I hope I will always retain due respect for that old-fashioned virtue, as you call it."

She took her place opposite him, but made no motion towards availing herself of the accorded privilege of taking the first move:

"I think our game will have to wait a little while this morning, father. I want to have a long and a plain talk with you,—must have, in fact."

The sybarite leaned back in his chair with a groan:

"Spare me! Are the mules dying with epizootic? Send for a veterinary. Are the gin-saws in need of sharpening? Send for a gin-wright."

Ida held up her hand imperiously:

"Father, I am in no mood for your cynical jests. I have just come from White Cliffs. Mrs. Lorimer is very ill, but I do not think she will die. Her sons do."

"White Cliffs! You have been to White Cliffs, and have the temerity to acknowledge it to me?" His face was purple with rage.

"I have."

"And you are not afraid of my curse?"

"Not in the least."

There was such cool assurance, such indomitable courage, in her face and voice that her father felt suddenly self-convicted of foolish bluster. He shifted his position restlessly, but remained silent.

"Father," she said, in a sweet, grave voice, utterly devoid of disrespect, "I want you to listen to me quietly. When I get through, then will be time enough for any vaporing you may feel inclined to. But things must be altered."

"You take advantage of my helpless old age to insult me with impunity, girl. It is the common lot of parents to experience the ingratitude of children. But go on; go on. I am listening."

It was poor old Lear's lament minus its dignity and its provocation. She let it pass without comment.

"One hears a great deal of what children owe to their parents in this world, father, but remarkably little of what parents owe to their children. Among other fixed moral laws of creation is the one that compels a child to believe every word its parent utters, for no better reason than that it is uttered by a parent.

"For twenty-one years, father, or, at least, ever since I have had sense enough to imbibe hatred, I have been told that it was my duty to hate anybody, everybody, rather, and everything, connected with White Cliffs. And I honestly tried to do my duty in that respect. I owed it to my father.

"When I met Dennis Lorimer at the Pass that summer on my one free holiday and fell in love with him, I felt like the worst of criminals and a traitor to you. There was some mysterious thing between

him and me, between me and my happiness, that I bowed before with the blindness of fetichism. I drove my lover away from me, with more resolution, perhaps, than I would have exercised if he had committed a crime in his own person. I owed it to my father.

"When he came to me and told me that he was going into exile for my sake, that his mother's vindictive determination to separate us had carried her to the extent of telling him that he must either vow never to try to see me, or leave her presence then and there, never to return again, I helped him to bow to the fiat which bore equally upon us both. I told him we owed it to our parents. And when you, hearing through Cato's treachery that he was in the summer-house that day, sent him your insulting message, I almost despised him for the promptness and meekness with which he obeyed it. He went away, and in my heart I called him a coward. I began to cultivate hatred in my own person. Your leaven was at work, you see, father. I owed it to you to learn how to hate.

"Dennis came back to see me six months ago, father. He told me then that he had been looking for Sibley. He could not wring this rusty old secret from his mother. You would not admit him to your presence, but if he could find Sibley he would face him, man to man, and demand to know what it was that stood between the houses of White Cliffs and Glenburnie."

The old sybarite leaned forward in his chair in an eager attitude of attention:

"Well? and Sibley,—did he find him?"

"It was not a difficult thing to do, father. Sibley is in New Orleans,—has been in a good business there for some time now. You knew that?" He dropped his eyes silently.

"It is pitiable, father," she went on, impetuously, "to see a parent drop his eyes before a child,—a helpless girl at that! But was it right, father, to leave me in ignorance all this time that Sibley had written to you, telling you if you would relinquish your absurd vow, and take your proper place at home, he would come back and help you?"

"Sibley is an unruly, tempestuous fellow,—troublesome. I did not want him."

"Not so easily trodden under foot as a girl. But he is coming back, father. He and Dennis are good friends. Dennis faced him like a man, and Sibley had to confess that he was as ignorant as the rest of us. But out there in the breezy fresh current of life that those two move in, this poor ragged old scarecrow that you and the older Lorimers have been shaking at each other all these years tumbled all to pieces. It had no substance of its own. I found that out for myself to-day, father."

"How?" the old man asked, doggedly.

"By kneeling at the bedside of a sick woman and asking her to tell me if, as her vision grew larger and clearer, the fret and the worry of this whole miserable business did not grow infinitesimally small. She said it did. And she told me all that I wanted to know. I told her, father, that I had promised Dennis to marry him and to go away

with him, to make a home for ourselves, if he would find Sibley and bring him back here, to take this unjust burden from my shoulders. I told her I should not feel comfortable at the thought that we had kept it all from her: she had a right to know that we were going to be married in spite of her, in spite of you, in spite of the miserable old threadbare vendetta. And I came in here to tell you the same, father."

"What did she say?" He ignored the closing sentence.

"She put her arms around my neck. She kissed me, father, and she called me daughter. She told me to tell you that there would soon be no one left for you to hate,—to let the old worn-out feud be buried in her grave."

"No one left for me to hate! And—I have loved her all my life, —her, and no other woman, ever!"

"Father!"

His gray head had fallen forward on his breast. His lids were closed and empurpled. He stretched out his hands blindly, gropingly. He was trying to say something. Ida knelt close by the side of his chair.

"My brave, brave child! I am glad it has ended so! Give Sibley my love,—and Dennis."

It was so sudden, so utterly incomprehensible, that even when the family physician told her that he had known for years that her father must eventually go in just that sudden fashion from heart-failure, she found it hard to believe that he was no longer there at Glenburnie, wasting his manhood, ignoring his responsibilities, demanding daily tribute of her, bodily, mentally, and morally.

"Thank God, he died with a blessing on his lips for a Lorimer," she wrote to Sibley, and sealed the letter with a black impress of a martlet.

"I am sorry he did not know about Sibley's child, Dido," she said that night, reaching out her hand for a touch of the hard faithful one that had never yet failed her. "I meant to have told him. But——"

"You done it all for the best. It ain't all cleared up yet. And he had a mighty turn for pesterin' about things. It would have just given him a lot of questions to ask which nobody but your brother could answer."

"Sibley will be here in a day or two."

"Thank the Lord for all his mercies!"

"And Dennis too."

A wan smile flitted over her white face, and, closing her tired eyes, she fell asleep with her lover's name on her lips and her hand lying like a snow-flake in black Dido's clasp.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHY should not one derive all the satisfaction that could possibly be extracted from grumbling to one's heart's content, when there was ready to one's hand a patient, equable hospital nurse, into whose discreet bosom one might empty "cart-loads" of family secrets without the slightest danger of their ever being hauled up again?

Dick Lorimer, aching and bruised, disappointed and disgusted, feeling that he had made a thorough mess of a very important mission, immediately resolved to avail himself of that privilege the very next time his particular "white-cap" took her seat by his cot.

He would like to have some sort of name to call her by. "Nurse" was simply "beastly." She had such a soft little hand, such great serious eyes, such a tender way about her when she asked a "fellow" how he "felt now," that it was almost (not quite) enough to reconcile "a fellow to a broken leg."

He said as much to the surgeon on his rounds, adding, "I would like to know what you all call her, doctor."

"'Mrs. Hamilton' is what we call her. Yes, all the sick folks fall in love with her. You are only obeying an inexorable law of your nature. Here she comes now."

Adown the long spotlessly white room, whose colorless polished cleanliness was in itself an aggravation to Dick, who loved life in all its warm tints, its vivid phases, came the nurse towards them. The surgeon greeted her with, "You are to let this damaged young man talk as much as ever he pleases, nurse Hamilton. We want him kept quiet, but he is more apt to keep his leg still while his tongue wags. Doubtless there is a letter to be written to somebody. There always is in these cases."

"Yes. And I want you to write it."

Dick fired his answer to the surgeon's suggestion point-blank at the nurse. He had turned his head sidewise to look into the clear steadfast eyes that had such a strange fascination for him. If he was not mistaken, that was the very thing she was trying to prevent.

"You will write it for me, will you not, Mrs. Hamilton?"

"Of course I will. See, I will be back presently with writing-materials."

When she returned with her portfolio she had on blue glasses.

"What did you do that for?" Dick asked, with a flash of decidedly impertinent resentment. "Those goggles, I mean."

"To make myself comfortable." She opened the portfolio and selected a sheet of paper. "I am ready."

"But I am not," he answered, petulantly; "and if you don't mean to let me look at you while I am dictating, I'll make a mess of it. That's about all I'm fit for, anyway."

"For what?"

"For making a mess of things."

"You mean your leg? You should not have tried to jump on the car while it was in motion. There is enough time for all our needs, if we would only take it."

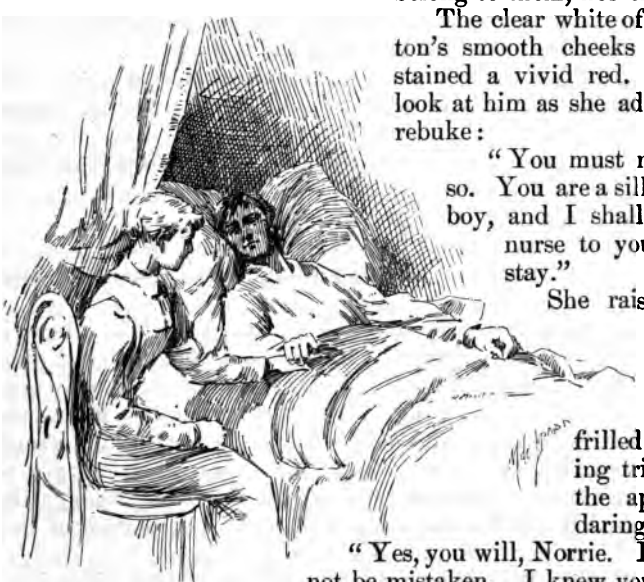
"This looks like it, don't it?" He indicated his helpless leg by an angry touch of his long brown hand. "I needed just ten more minutes yesterday than I could manage to procure. I would have been steaming up the river towards White Cliffs, instead of lying here with a broken leg, if I could have found it."

"But you have plenty of time to get well in," said nurse Hamilton, with a smile which Dick mentally pronounced twice as sad as tears: "so my theory holds good, after all. Now, then, won't you please begin?"

"Oh, I say, please sit where I can look at you without making a corkscrew of my neck."

Thus directly importuned, Mrs. Hamilton moved a fraction more directly in his line of vision.

"I wish you hadn't put those blinkers on, and I wish I could see you without that cap; it's a regular disfigurement. And you don't belong to them, nor they to you."



HE HAD CALLED HER "NORRIE."

The clear white of nurse Hamilton's smooth cheeks was suddenly stained a vivid red. She did not look at him as she administered her rebuke:

"You must not talk to me so. You are a silly, impertinent boy, and I shall send another nurse to you. I will not stay."

She raised her hand with a quick gesture. She was too late. Her white frilled cap was swaying triumphantly on the apex of Dick's daring fingers.

"Yes, you will, Norrie. I knew I could not be mistaken. I knew your voice. You couldn't put it in a mob-cap and blue goggles. Now, then"—he flung the cap upon the foot of his bed,—"I have not made such an infernal mess of things after all; for I have found you."

She was looking at him with wide eyes through a mist. He had called her "Norrie," and the ice-crust that had been forming over her chilled and lonely heart suddenly broke up under the warmth of the boy's caressing tones.

In the six short months of her life at White Cliffs Dick had been her most attached squire. This, the youngest of all the Lorimer boys, had been a special favorite of hers, and she of his. His "little sister," his "Madame John," and his "Princess Norrie" had been pleasant to remember. She had no grievance here. She leaned towards him with dewy eyes.

"And having found me, what then, Dick? Have you missed me?"

"Have I missed you? We have all missed you, sister Nora," he said, seriously. "John! poor old Johnnie! he has aged under it tremendously. Lord, how old and feeble he does look! He can't seem to get used to it. He never speaks of you, though. That's what hurts us all so bad. He goes about the house like some dumb brute that has got its death-wound."

"Hush! for dear pity's sake, hush! He gave a death-wound before he received one."

It came from her in broken sobbing gasps.

"To you?" Dick's incredulous eyes were upon her face.

"To me."

"Then he is a whelp, and I'll tell him so to his face as soon as I get home, if he gives me a death-wound for it. I will, by heavens, if he was forty times my brother!"

"Hush, Dick! You are a dear, hot-headed boy! Have you yet to learn that some sores cannot be healed by fresh blows?"

"But you will let me know what it all means, Norrie? It is so hard to credit John's being a brute to you, when your leaving him as you did has just knocked all the go and the grit out of him."

Nora's thin lips curled incredulously, and she fumbled restlessly with the contents of her portfolio.

Dick closed his eyes with a groan of despair.

"Does the leg hurt very much? Let me wet the bandages."

"I had forgotten all about the pesky thing. It is you who hurt very much.

"Oh, Lord, if people only wouldn't be so mysterious! There is some mistake at the bottom of all this misery, and that's what I said to Lorrie when Rafe and I left home. I said, 'Lorrie, everybody goes to the city when they get miserable and want to hide. Sib Fairbanks went there, Dennis went there, and John's wife has gone there.' I said, 'Lorrie, you needn't blurt it all out to John, but when we get to New Orleans Rafe can hunt Dennis up, and I'll ferret out John's wife. When I find her, I'll kill her but what I'll get to the bottom of this nonsense.' And now here you are——"

"Where is Rafe? Why is he not here with you?" nurse Hamilton asked, in a dry, harsh voice.

"He got off yesterday with Dennis. I missed the boat, you know. I meant to have gone, too."

"And who is Dennis?"

"Who is Dennis? Didn't John ever tell you about Dennis and Ida Fairbanks? That's another Lorimer mess."

The portfolio slid from nurse Hamilton's lap upon the polished bare floor and lay there unheeded. Dick was in a private apartment.

There were no other patients to see the gentle, white-capped ministrant kneel beside his narrow iron cot, clasp his hands in both of hers, and, with her soft eyes glued ravenously to his face, whisper, in a voice over which she had lost all control,—

"No. I never so much as knew there was a Dennis Lorimer. Dear, dear boy, tell me about Dennis and Ida Fairbanks."

Then Dick told her—somewhat fantastically, perhaps, for he was young, and the romance of it grew with the telling—all that he knew of Dennis's unfortunate wooing of the Glenburnie maiden.

"And, you see, of all us boys," he added, "John is the only one who would ever consent to be a go-between. It looked like playing a trick on mother. But Dennie and John were always particular cronies, and the last time he came up he coaxed John over, and John coaxed her over. She went with John one night to see Dennie at old Isham's house. They patched it up some way between them. Then, when mother got ill, she began to worry so over Dennis that Rafe and I started out in search of a brother, and found him. But you were the long-lost sister I was hunting for. I got disheartened, though, and agreed to go home with the boys."

"Dick, oh, Dick, I have been such an awful fool! John will never forgive me,—never! He ought not to."

John's wife was sobbing, there on her knees by the boy's bedside. He laid his hand caressingly on her bowed head.

"Won't you please tell me all about it, sister Nora? I know I'm nothing but a lubberly boy, but we Lorimer boys don't go back on our womenkind for a trifle. I told the boys Norrie was all right. Thank God, you have not made me take a word of it back. Won't you let me send word to John, Norrie? Just telegraph the one word, Come?"

"Not yet. Wait. Go to sleep now, dear. I must think, alone."

She stood up, kissed him tenderly on the forehead, and then stole quietly away to her own room.

The day was nearly gone when she came back to him. Her face, thinner and whiter by many degrees, Dick thought, than when John had first brought her to White Cliffs, wore a look of such absolute serenity that it had gained an angelic touch of beauty.

"Norrie, you are divine! You look as if you had been closeted with an angel!"

"I have been," she said with sweet gravity,—"the angel of peace. I have written to John myself, Dick."

"Hurrah! Won't somebody please throw up my hat for me?—that is, if I own such a piece of furniture."

"And oh, Dick, are the Lorimers forgiving?"

"The Lorimer forgiveness is not involved here. Oh, by the way, this came while you were gone." He put an unsealed note in her hand. "That must have been a monstrous long letter, Norrie. You've been gone three hours."

She did not answer him. She was reading the note. Feminine instinct made her look at the signature first:

"Sibley Fairbanks." She started, and with a wildly beating heart read on. What she read was this:

"My dear Mr. Lorimer,—I have just heard by the merest chance (your surgeon being a personal friend of mine) of your inconvenient accident. He tells me that there is not a shadow of danger attendant upon it. I should have called in person to inquire, but am making forced and hurried preparations to leave for Glenburnie, having just been wired that my father is dead. Permit me to express my regrets at your pain and detention. Your friend and neighbor,

"Sibley Fairbanks."

Sibley Fairbanks. Poor Amelia's first husband! The man who had deserted her so heartlessly. She had never seen him. Mellie married him while she, Nora, was teaching in a school in Arkansas. But Mellie's child would know its father at last. Would it be for Ninette's happiness?

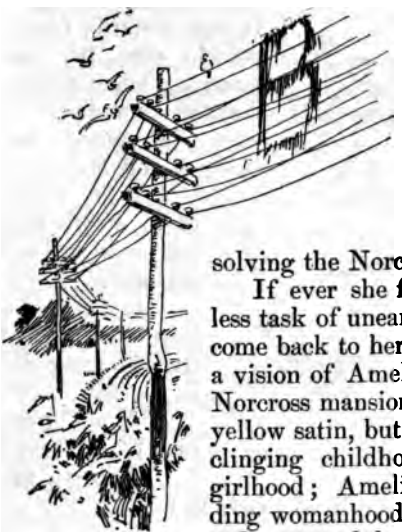
She folded the letter and slipped it back in the envelope. Dick had opened it impulsively by running his forefinger under the flap. The unbroken wax impression of a *martlet* confronted her.

She stared at it with horror in her eyes and a confused buzzing in her ears. Was that, then, the solution to the Norcross tragedy? Had this brute, after flinging her poor Mellie aside like a flower that had lost its fragrance, come back in a jealous frenzy and utterly extinguished the life he had marred so cruelly? If God reigned, there must be justice among men. Not revenge; simply justice!

She put the letter back on Dick's bed, minus the envelope. She sat mechanically through the half-hour which she declared nervously was all she could spare him that night.

There was work for her to do, and the wraith of her murdered Mellie reproached her for not being about it. She reproached herself for her bewildered indecision. She stood under the gas-jet in her own room a long time after she had completed her preparations for retiring. It was after she had risen from her knees that she said aloud, as if in answer to a protest, "Patience, my dear. It will take him three days to reach his destination."

CHAPTER XV.



Y comparison with electricity steam is a slow-plodding beast. I can head him off, after consultation with a lawyer, my dear."

She said it aloud, as if she would reassure the unresting spirit that was forever goading her to fresh endeavor in the direction of solving the Norcross mystery.

If ever she felt tempted to give over the hopeless task of unearthing her sister's slayer, there would come back to her, with reproach in its shadowy eyes, a vision of Amelia, not as she had seen her in the Norcross mansion, ablaze with jewels and flashing in yellow satin, but Amelia in her peculiarly helpless, clinging childhood; Amelia in her pure, happy girlhood; Amelia in her winning, unsullied, budding womanhood; the Amelia whom she had loved and protected before that rash marriage with Sibley Fairbanks, which had been dissolved, as rashly, at the close of three years.

Of that Amelia, and of none other, would she permit herself to think. It was that Amelia who was still appealing to her for help. She raised her arms despairingly.

In all this wide world, full of clear heads, strong arms, and tender hearts, there was none to care, not one to help her throw the light of truth upon that dark, dark spot in her memory. Perhaps it had been reserved for Dick to help her. Perhaps the clue had been put into his hands for her guidance.

No one could have had any motive for that dastardly deed but Sibley Fairbanks. Amelia—the beautiful, wilful Amelia—had not made him a good wife. She had heard only Mellie's partial statement; but it had been enough.

Sibley Fairbanks had the motive of jealous revenge to steel his arm; and—there was the witness of the seal of the Fairbanks family.

"I will do it, my dear. I will follow this clue to its bitter end. Perhaps then you will rest, and so will I."

Yes, steam is a slow-plodding beast, especially when every nerve in one's body is a-quiver with impatience.

Sibley Fairbanks, steaming slowly up the river in answer to Ida's telegram, was in just such a feverish state of unrest, until, eagerly running across the clumsy staging that was flung out for his convenience at his own landing, he saw two carriages waiting under the spreading sycamore-trees. One was a hackney-coach occupied by two white men.

Old Cato stood bareheaded by the horses of the other. His

withered black face had beamed a homely welcome to "his boy Sibley" long before the gangway had been adjusted. Sibley had waved his hat cordially in return. It was towards Cato's vehicle that he was hurrying, when a sober face and a massive form were interposed between it and him:

"I AM SORRY, MR. FAIRBANKS, BUT—YOU ARE MY PRISONER."

"I am sorry, Mr. Fairbanks, but—you are my prisoner."

He recoiled a step and looked the man amazedly in the face.

"Your prisoner?"

The man extended a folded piece of paper. He declined touching it.

"Who are you?"

"Martin Hastings, sheriff of Dalton."

"But are not you making a mistake, Mr. Sheriff?"

"Not unless the mistake lies in thinking that you are the Sibley Fairbanks herein described."

Again he offered the warrant for perusal. This time Sibley took it and read it, standing there under the old sycamore-trees that stretched their gnarly branches protectingly over him, with Cato watching the whole strange scene in throbbing anxiety.

Fairbanks grew ghastly white as he read. The paper trembled in his grasp. When he handed it back, it fell between him and sheriff Hastings. He took out his white silk handkerchief and wiped the great beads from his forehead. He was afraid to trust himself to words. At last,—

"Does that mean," he asked, huskily, "that I must go with you?—go back to New Orleans?"

"It does."

"Do you know what brought me here?"

"You are here to attend your father's funeral. We have thought of that, and are disposed to make it as easy on you as possible. My companion here—my deputy—is entirely unknown in this neighborhood. With your permission, he will drive to Glenburnie in the same carriage with you. I would advise you to go quietly. He can pass as a friend who came up with you, you know."

"I suppose you mean to be kind, so I ought to thank you. I do," said Sibley, with mechanical courtesy.

"No call for gratitude; only, you see, there's no use your kicking against the pricks, and there's no use our making it any rougher on you than need be."

"What is my friend's name?" asked Fairbanks, smiling somewhat grimly, as the sheriff beckoned to his companion, a slight, boyish, beardless young man.

"Moore. As gentle as a girl, as long as you walk straight, but Old Nick himself couldn't get away from him." He had caught and misread the wintry smile on Fairbanks's lips.

"I have no desire to try his patience in that direction," said his prisoner, walking haughtily away in the direction of his own carriage. At its steps he paused and courteously turned to the officer of the law with a regal air:

"Before me, Mr. Moore."

Moore entered the vehicle. Sibley stepped in after him. Old Cato clambered to his perch on the high old-fashioned box, and touched up his horses briskly. It was a grim home-going! What fiction should he invent to account to Ida, the most fastidiously reserved of women, for bringing a strange man home with him to his father's funeral? She would think him a brute.

He was not good at lies. He was sick of shams, and of trying to parry fate's spiteful thrusts. Should he say to her, with blunt truthfulness, that this beardless boy, from whose cassimere trousers-pockets a pair of ugly hand-cuffs were permitted to obtrude, was his keeper? —that he was a prisoner of the law, wanted for the murder of his wife, the little Ninette's mother? He could fancy his high-bred Ida's horror and disgust.

It would not be an easy thing to do. It grew harder even in the bare contemplation of it, as each revolution of the wheels brought him closer to the home whose shelter he had spurned in his hot boyish resentment ten years ago. It grew to the proportions of a ghastly impossibility, as the crunching of the wheels on the gravelled drive brought to the open front door of Glenburnie a touchingly helpless group.

Ida, as tall and stately as some pure white Easter lily, Ninette, his own little daughter, all a-flutter with flaunting ribbons and crisp embroideries, clinging to Ida's black draperies, and old Dido, the old mammy who had rocked him to sleep in her withered arms so many, many times in the long ago.

They were waiting for him, watching for him,—glad of his home-coming, eager for his home-staying.

He groaned aloud, and dropped his head upon his breast.

"Is that all there is of them?" Moore asked, looking out at the small feminine group.

"That is all."

"No men-folks but you?"

"None."

"It's hard lines, no mistake. I wish it wasn't me that had to take you away from them again to-morrow. Hanged if I ever had a rougher job put on me."

"It is creditable to you to feel so. I am obliged to you."

"Oh, as for that, it's natural to suppose that anybody in my line of business is a brute; but if you can think of any way in which I can soften this consistently with my duty, command me."

"I cannot think at all," said Sibley, leaning back among the moth-eaten cushions of the old family coach, with a groan of helpless wretchedness.

"I have it!" said Moore, briskly. "I am a man prospecting for land. You kindly gave me a lift this far. Your man puts you out at the front door and drives away with me. He can hide me somewhere. The day after the—after the——"

"The funeral is set for to-morrow," said Sibley, steadily. "The boat that brought us up returns from Vicksburg to-morrow night. I will be there."

"I will trust you! I never felt surer of a man since I went into the business."

"Thank you."

They were at the front door. Cato drew up with a jerk. Sibley let himself out, and, giving Cato an order in a low tone, turned slowly and hesitatingly towards the little group in the door-way.

Moore's device had given him a respite only,—a very short one at that. Ida's arms were about him. Her wet cheek lay against his. Dido's sobs were ringing in his ears. Ninette was standing shyly aloof, looking on with grave wonder at this dismal scene of welcome.

"Auntie!" she spoke presently, sharp rebuking words, "you said my papa was coming to make us all glad and happy. He has come, and you and mammy Dido do nothing but cry and wipe your eyes on your handkerchiefs. Is that my papa?"

Sibley put Ida away from him and turned towards the small fault-finder. He held out his hands.

"Is that my Ninette? Do you not remember me, child? Have you not the faintest recollection of me? No love at all to give me?"

At each yearning question Ninette shook her small golden head in grave-eyed negation. Then, in rapid crescendo,—

"I remember my Norrie! I remember Uncle John, and Dick, and Rafe, and—and Céleste. But you—never! Auntie Ida said my papa was the most beautiful man in the world. She showed me his picture, and made me kiss it every day, and taught me to pray 'God bless my papa' every night. But you don't look one bit like my papa's picture; not one tiny little speck."

He drew back his suppliant hands.

"Let her be," he said, as Dido whispered a reproach in her pink ear. "Let her continue to worship the unreal father you have all made her acquainted with. Where does our father lie, Ida?"

Ida turned, and, with her hand resting upon his arm, led the way towards the drawing-room, where all that was left of Ames Fairbanks lay in state upon a velvet-draped couch.

Mechanically she gave him all the dreary particulars of those last days. They stood on opposite sides of the still form, scarcely less responsive now than it had been all these years.

"But oh, Sib," she burst forth, sobbingly, "it is awful not to be able to miss him more! I feel as if he had been dead all these years, lying here waiting for sepulture. I am so tired, Sibley, so tired of my loneliness, of my horrible feeling of responsibility for everything, so

tired of having no one but Dido and Cato to consult with. Sometimes, but that was before Ninette came, I have wondered how I managed to keep sane. I have envied the negroes in the cabins, because they worked in gangs and sat about their cabin-doors of evenings, in groups, friendly groups, who helped each other to talk and to sing and to laugh."

"My poor, poor little Ida!" He came around to where she stood and folded her tenderly in his arms.

Her eyes grew luminous. It was so sweet to be caressed, to be cared for, to be pitied even by one's very own.

"But it will be different now,—now that you have come back to live. Oh, Sib, I have wanted you so, all these years! I feel as if a mountain were lifted from my breast. Poor, poor father!"

She turned towards the sheeted face with a passionate gesture of self-reproach. "It sounds as if I were finding fault with him, Sibley; but it's not that,—not that: it is the great joy of having you back once more, of knowing that you are here to stay,—that a Fairbanks is once more at the helm."

"Let us go into the old school-room and talk, Ida," he said, with sudden brusqueness. "It will be easier there than here." He drew her away with him to the sunny little room in the wing where he and she had spent so many hours of their home-school life. Ida smiled as she opened the door:

"It is Ninette's room now. But you do not need to be told that. She pervades the atmosphere."

Through a litter of childish belongings, scattered toys, pictured puzzles, dolls in every stage of dilapidation, they picked their way to a sofa against the wall.

"It is of Ninette I want to talk," said Fairbanks, dropping among the faded cretonne cushions with a heavy sigh; "of Ninette, and of something else."

Dennis Lorimer, owing to a slight mishap to the boat he and Rafe had taken, reached White Cliffs the day after Ames Fairbanks's funeral.

His first evening was given to his mother. The next, all impatience, he started for Glenburnie. There was no one there but old Cato. To his volley of surprised questions the old man gave one answer:

"This note will make it clear, ef anything kin."

The note did not make it clear. It was full of love and full of mystery. It was from Ida, who called him her "dear Dennis" and begged him to forgive her the blow she was compelled to deal him. "Fate," she wrote, "still seems to pursue us with malicious intent. Sibley is in trouble,—great trouble. He needs me every moment. I have gone back to New Orleans with him. Until the awful cloud that hangs over him is dissipated, there is no room in my heart, even for you. Oh, Dennis, my love, you will hear it all soon enough. The newspaper vultures are already hovering in sight. They have scented a fresh disgrace to the name of Fairbanks.

"It is all so horribly incomprehensible that I cannot be any clearer. I am groping, myself. The one clear idea that has taken full possession of me is that you will thank God that this blow descended before your name was indissolubly linked with the unfortunate one which I will drag with me, all stained as it is, to my grave.

"Believe one thing, always: I love you.

"IDA."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE sleuth-hounds of the law were in full cry upon Sibley Fairbanks's trail.

The reward of five thousand dollars, which was still waiting for a claimant, acted as a permanent spur to a few tireless spirits on the detective force. They had at last got hold of a positive clue, which they proceeded to unravel with patient skill. This clue was a seal with the impress of a martlet upon it, and it was attached to three inches of broken gold chain of fine workmanship.

Day by day, hour by hour, the coil of evidence lengthened and strengthened, until, to the one faithful heart that clung to him through good and evil report, his case looked hopeless indeed.

Given the established facts that Eugene Norcross's wife at an earlier stage of her career had been Sibley Fairbanks's wife, that their connubial infelicity had been even greater than that of average yoke-mates, that Fairbanks's failure to support his wife properly had led to a temporary separation, that during that separation she had taken steps to have her marriage declared null and void, that subsequently she had reappeared in society as Eugene Norcross's splendor-loving and dashing wife, that at about the same period of time Fairbanks returned to the city, in improved circumstances, but naturally consumed with a jealous hatred of the woman who had tossed him aside like a misfitting glove, and the groundwork of the tragedy was complete.

It only wanted the legal verbiage and profound platitudes of contending counsel to put this choice morsel into final shape for rolling under the famished tongue of public curiosity.

On the morning of the day set for his trial, Sibley Fairbanks ate his breakfast with sullen stoicism. "It may possibly be the last one I shall have the privilege of ordering to suit my own taste," he said, with grim facetiousness, to Ida, pouring out his coffee, white-faced, but steady of nerve and resolute of heart. "If it goes against me,"—he cracked the shell of his soft-boiled egg with nice deliberation,—"return at once

to Glenburnie, with the child, and—and—if Lorimer seeks you in spite of all, don't repulse him, my dear. Promise me that, will you not?"

She did not answer him. She was watching his deliberate movements with strained attention, through a film that made him look grotesquely unfamiliar.

"My poor Ida! my truest of women! my lion-hearted sister! you are not going to break down now?"

"Sibley!"

She called his name in a husky whisper. Her voice seemed deserting her along with all the other organs that had been essential in that other world she used to live in. She had needed a voice once, when as a girl, as a woman, she had breathed and moved in that other world, at a fair old place called Glenburnie. But she had nothing in common with that other girl, that other world. She was turning to stone. She was already petrified. Her heart had turned to rock. Her tears were so many hard, cold little pebbles. It was more comfortable so. It helped her to stand things. And there was so much,—oh, so much to stand!

"Sibley!"

"Well? I think I answered you before, Ida."

"There is one question I would like to have you answer before—before——"

"My case is called?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"You have never said yet—never to me, though of course I know it, dear, only I would love to have you put it in words,—you have never said, in so many words, '*I did not do it.*' Not for the lawyers: words mean nothing to them; they are only pebbles for their slings. But to me, Sibley, the sister who loves you, and whose heart you have broken."

She was coming towards him with tender outstretched arms, her worn, thin face all a-quiver with pain. He put out a repulsing hand before folding his arms sullenly:

"No; I have never put it into words for you. I did not know it was necessary. Forgive me, child, every pang I have cost you. I asked the prison authorities to let me breakfast with you this morning, for I knew what this day would be to you, and I wanted, if possible, to say something comforting to you. Somehow, I don't seem to have managed very well. I wish you had some woman friend near you. I wish you had not come to the city with me. It makes it harder for both of us. Will you bring the child here and let me say good-by to her? If it goes against me, I shall not see either you or her again. I would not like you to come so close to a convicted criminal."

Her arms had fallen to her side like lead. He would not put it into words. It must be that he could not. She tottered from the room to fetch Ninette. In the darker hall she nearly stumbled over the two prison officials who were standing guard at the door of the room where she and Sibley had just got through with that dismal breakfast. One

of the men put out a rough hand with kindly intent. He saved her a fall, for which she did not even thank him. When she came back along the same way, after a hurried five minutes spent in rousing Ninette and buttoning a tiny dressing-gown over her night dress, the sentinels were gone. So was Sibley. He had scrawled a message on an envelope and left it on her napkin:

"I have taken the easiest way for us both. If I do not come back to you to-night, leave at once for Glenburnie. I wish you had some woman friend near you. As for my little daughter, Ida, all I ask of you is to make of her as true a woman as my sister is. She will send no man to the dogs if you do that."

HER LONG WHITE HANDS BEHIND HER HEAD.

She sat down on a comfortless chair which chanced to be close by the barred shutters of her one front window, and clasped her long white hands behind her head. There was nothing to do but to wait and to listen. The verdict would be proclaimed on the streets some time that day. The Norcross affair was worth money to the newspapers. The public would be eager for the extras as they fell fluttering from the presses.

How long she sat there she could not tell. She had lost all record of time. Perhaps it was another hour, another day, another week, when she heard it in the distance,—then nearer, shriller, more distinctly incoherent:

"Extra!"—mumble, mumble—"Norcross" mumble, mumble—"here's your extra!"

She opened her blinds and leaned out in feverish haste. The enterprising *gamin* caught her swift motion. He was across the street and at her window in a second, with the fresh damp sheet held aloft. She seized it, flung him his pay, and drew the shutters together again with hands which almost refused their service.

"Guilty!"

Two small arms were placed about the bent neck of her crouching figure.

"Auntie, I loves you. I loves my papa. Where is my papa? I want him to come here."

Ida shook her off ruthlessly. There was nothing in life worth any attention but that flimsy printed sheet in her lap.

It was to spare her father this that God took him. But why take one and leave the other?

"Why should I, O Lord of might and justice, be left to suffer what was too great for him to bear? Is this infinite justice, infinite pity, infinite mercy?"

Ninette lifted up her voice in wailing. The room was dark. That crouching figure on the floor filled her small soul with fear. The unusual is full of terror for baby-souls. Ida took no more note of her than if her wailing had been the wailing of the wind in the tree-tops outside.

For once in her life Ninette was absolutely forgotten by everybody. Her aunt was poring again ravenously over the closely-printed account of the trial.

After a long time she looked at Ninette curiously. She had just mastered the situation. It was to John Lorimer's wife that the detectives owed the clue they had just followed out to so triumphant a finale.

Slowly a light broke over Ida's haggard face. "Come here, Ninette," she said, aloud. "I want you, dear."

Ninette came gladly, wiping her wet eyes on the cuff of her little wrapper. Her aunt looked at her musingly.

"Little child, I wonder if you could soften her hard, hard heart. She used to love you. Perhaps, for your sake—— We will try it! We will go to her."

As she opened the door that led into the street, half an hour later, Dennis Lorimer stopped in front of it.

CHAPTER XVII.

JOHN! Why should I have been singled out to perpetuate it? Why should the hard task of doing Amelia justice not have been left in other hands? I feel as if I had erected fresh and stronger barriers between the houses of White Cliffs and Glenburnie. But I could not help it. It had to be done."

"No, you could not help it. It had to be done."

He echoed her words gravely. He had just a little while before come from the court-house, where he had waited to hear the verdict in the Norcross case. They had been sitting in sombre silence a long minute.

"Poor Ida! poor Dennis! And to think that but for me they might at last have come together! No one ever would have suspected."

"Poor Ida! and poor Dennis! They have waited so long."

"John, there is a reproach in your voice!" She left her seat, and, coming behind him, she put her arms around his neck and laid her

soft cheek upon the crown of his head. There were tears in her eyes, but if he felt them dropping among his close-clipped locks he made no sign, other than putting up one hand to lay it caressingly on hers, as they lay interlocked about his brown throat. She was very dear to him—this recovered wife.

"Not for you, wife," he said, soothingly. "You could not help it. It had to be done."

"She would not let me rest. Wherever I went, whatever I was doing, I could see her pleading eyes, I could hear her reproaching me for not caring. Oh, John, it was awful, awful! All my life long I have been caring for her, protecting her, putting her happiness before mine. And, John, it was because of her that I said *no* to you that first time. I loved you then. But I said, I cannot ask him to care for us both, and I cannot leave her to buffet the world alone. Poor Mellie! she was always so giddy. It was because of her that I said no the second time,—though it almost broke my heart, John, to say it. But she was away from me then, and, although she was married to him, Sibley Fairbanks, she used to write me such reckless wild letters and tell me that she was coming back to me. She kept me in fear. I thought, if disgrace awaited me, you should not be involved in it. Then, when she disappeared, John, and sent me her child to care for, in a foolish moment I determined to marry you, and take Amelia's child up among the Fairbanks, thinking they might see and grow to love it, and through it all the child might come to be well with Amelia and her husband. It was not right, John. It was wrong—oh, so wrong—to you!"

"We will not ever allude to the past. You have suffered sufficiently, my darling."

"I have! I have! Oh, John, I have!"

She was distinctly sobbing now. He drew her to him.

"You have forgiven me so much, John. But this last is too much."

"Dear, it is horrible from beginning to end, but, with a clue to the identity of your sister's slayer put into your hands, what less could you do than follow it to its solution? You would not only have been a traitor to your sister, but you would have been compounding a felony, if you had not done just what you did do."

"Oh, thank you for putting it that way! God bless you, John, for thinking of such sweet, comforting words!"

She lay quiet in his arms, her wet cheek pressed against his shoulder, her breath coming audibly in long, sobbing catches every few seconds. He bent his head to bring his lips close to her ear:

"It is good to feel you so near, Norrie, to have you so close to me. I don't know how I lived through the days without you,—how I existed, believing that you would never come back to me. My wife that was lost and is found!"

"Hush!"

She drew herself closer to his heart by clasping her arms about his neck. Her lips were upon his cheek, her soft breath stirred his hair. They sat very quiet, recognizing in that mute communion how much

they really were to each other. Once he caught in a half-whisper the plaintive refrain,—

"Poor Ida! and poor, poor Dennis! If I could only *do* something!"

Even then her opportunity was coming to her. A knock at the door, and one of the hotel waiters stood before them:

A lady wanted to see Mrs. Lorimer, alone.

"But I don't know anybody here,"—she turned perplexedly towards John,—"outside the people I used to know; and if it is any of them, they have come from pure curiosity."

"I think the lady is in trouble. She wears a black veil, and her voice is weak," the waiter volunteered, by way of enlightenment.

"Can it be——"

"Show the lady up," said John Lorimer, peremptorily.

AT SIGHT OF THAT DESOLATE FIGURE.

"Why should she come to me? To reproach me? To curse me? How can I face her, John, this desolate girl?"

John took her in his arms and kissed her gravely on the forehead:

"Dear wife, bear in mind that you only obeyed an inexorable necessity. You have nothing to flinch from. She asked to see you alone. I wish I could help you; but I cannot."

Ida Fairbanks found Nora standing calm and collected by the bare white marble centre-table. But at sight of that desolate figure, with its impenetrable black veil dropping in heavy folds about her majestic form, Nora's composure forsook her entirely. She held out both hands imploringly as she sobbed,—

"You have come here to tell me that you hate me. You have come here to curse me for wrecking your happiness. I could not help it! The clue was in my hands. What would you have done?"

"Exactly what you did," said Ida, wearily. She had thrown back her veil, and stood looking at Nora with haggard eyes and lips that twitched convulsively:

"I started with Ninette. I thought I would bring her here to plead with you for her father; but—but—a friend met us and insisted upon my leaving the child with Mr. Lorimer until I had seen you. It was Dennis. I have been saying good-by to him,—giving him up a second time,—last time."

"Why? Oh, why?"

Nora was kneeling by the arm of the chair into which she had forced her visitor. "Surely it is not his wish?"

"No; it is not his wish. Poor Dennis! But do you not see how shocking it is to be thinking of anything but—*him?*" She put her hands to her head perplexedly. "I am so tired of thinking—so tired of trying to straighten things out!"

"You wanted me to do something for you?" Nora bent her head gently and kissed the white blue-veined hand that rested on the arm of the chair. "My heart aches for you! Oh, say that you forgive me!"

"Forgive you? Do you suppose I think you liked to do it? Oh, dear, no! It must have been horrible! And you Ninette's aunt,—the 'Norrie' she loves so dearly still. But—don't you see?—Dennis must not have a brother-in-law in the penitentiary for life. I believe they think that will be the sentence,—unless—unless——" She shuddered, closed her eyes, and her head dropped heavily back against the chair.

Nora sprang to her feet in alarm. Ida opened her eyes slowly:

"I have not fainted. I don't know how to faint. I came to ask you to do something. I feel as if you are the only one they would listen to. I wish Dennis had not followed me here. His face comes between me and Sibley. I ought not to think of a thing but my poor boy until—until I procure his pardon."

"Pardon!" Nora took up the word feverishly. "A pardon from the governor?"

Ida looked at her anxiously. "Yes. You could do it. She was your sister. Your wishes would carry weight. You loved her child,—his child. I thought for Ninette's sake, perhaps——"

Nora laid her hand over the girl's quivering lips as softly as a falling flower-petal: "Poor suffering sister, for your sake!"

A rush of feet, a shrill, childish treble, and Ninette, held aloft in Dennis's strong arms, was before them, fluttering her small handkerchief frantically: "He tells me to cry good news! hope! hope!"

Both women turned appealing eyes on Dennis. The torture of another moment's suspense could not be borne.

"A clue," he said, huskily, "but I do believe it will lead to Sibley's vindication."

Then, addressing himself now to Ida, now to Nora, he went on excitedly:

"I was sitting in the square, waiting for you, dear. I had allowed Ninette to wander off the length of a bench with some respectable-looking youngster, when, all of a sudden, a commotion of some sort carried every idler in the square to a certain corner of it. It doesn't take long to mass a crowd in that locality, and before I could make up my mind whether to sit it out or try to leave the square in advance of the ragged forerunners, two policemen were almost abreast of me, dragging between them a woman in a beastly state of intoxication.

"At sight of her, Ninette, there, set up a howl: 'Céleste! Céleste! my Céleste!'

"The mob came to a stand-still. The woman had wrenched herself free and darted towards the child. She was on her knees, clutching the little thing's skirts, and weeping piteously over her. 'It is my Ninette!—my little Ninette! They are taking your Céleste to jail. Beg for her, little one! plead for your Céleste! They say she is drunk. Plead for her, little one!' But Ninette, terrified beyond reason, pushed her away, and clung to my neck, shouting, 'Take her away! take her away! It isn't my Céleste!'

"Then, by the Lord Harry, Norrie, if ever you saw a face become suddenly viperish, that fiend's did. The policemen dragged her forward. She laughed, and shook her fist in the child's face. 'Little beast! what does it matter? I have had all the revenge I want out of the Lorimers and the Fairbanks and the Hemways.'"

Nora started violently. "Out of the Hemways? Oh, Dennis, can it be—— She was poor Mellie's servant: could she—— Mellie was the only Hemway she knew."

"It is a clue worth following up. I came to bring the child to you. I am going to consult the Chief of Police."

Slowly, cautiously, the slight indiscretion of a vengeful outburst was woven in and out with every strand of circumstantial evidence, until, standing at bay, the Frenchwoman, under severe interrogation, made her confession of guilt with a fierce recklessness born of despair:

"Yes," she said, "I have had all the revenge I wanted out of the Lorimers and Fairbanks! The women, I mean. They are arrogant and treated the nurse Céleste as if she were a worm. Worms turn sometimes; and Céleste Bougereaux is that sort of a worm. When Miss Fairbanks ordered me from the house and told me I was not a fit person to be with her niece, I hated her! When I got back to New Orleans, without place and without money, I was in despair. If I had been handsome, I need not have despaired. But *le bon Dieu* has cursed me with ugliness. I had, therefore, to look out for myself. A fellow-servant of mine at one time, a man named Bennett, feeling sorry for me, told me that his mistress, a beautiful and rich lady, wanted to change her maid, and I might possibly get the place. He took me to see her. I laughed to find that Mrs. Eugene Norcross was Ninette's mother. She did not laugh. She turned very white when I came into her beautiful library, where she was sitting alone. I knew too much of her past life. She spoke insolently to me. I don't know why it inflamed me so. It was perhaps because I had drunk some brandy just before going there. I went very near to her,

—I do not know what for; I put my hands about her throat,—I do not know what for. It was all done so quickly. I do not know why I did it at all. I think I meant only to frighten her. But she lay so very quiet that she frightened me. I did not ask Bennett to show me the way out. When I got back to my room I found that a little charm which I wore on my bracelet was gone. It was a bit of broken chain with a seal with a bird on it that the child Ninette had had among her playthings, and I had taken it from her, for she knew nothing of its value, and I liked it. It was a pretty trinket.

"I had no idea the whole thing—the mystery, I mean—would hinge on that. I have read all the trial. The Fairbanks and the Lorimers have suffered equally in it."

Then, glowering sullenly on her persecutors, as she called them, she folded her long, thin arms and stubbornly refused to utter another word.

But she had said enough to alter the complexion of the universe for the two families upon which the concentrated hatred of her ignorant soul had been centred. The lawyers did the rest.

It was several weeks after that accidental meeting of the child Ninette and her *bonne* that Lorimer Lorimer, turning, as was his wont, to thoughts for others, ordered his horse to ride over to Glenburnie. White Cliffs was giving thanks for mercies received, and it was only just that old Cato should be made a sharer in the universal joy.

"I think I'll just read him Dick's letter entire," he said to Rafe, who was lengthening his stirrup-straps for him after he had mounted. "It is such a bright, happy letter, and tells it all so clearly."

"It's been worth a drug-shop-full of tonics to mother," said Rafe, applying his broad open palm vigorously to the shining flank of Lorrie's horse by way of send-off.

"Don't let mother move until I come back," Lorrie looked over his shoulder to command.

Rafe laughed, and, bounding back up the stairs two at a time, laid the command peremptorily on the mistress of White Cliffs, who, though pale and thin from her late sickness, was essaying to grasp once more the domestic sceptre.

"You are not to move," said Rafe, severely; "that is, after I get you into that big chair in the corner. Lorrie says you are not."

Mrs. Lorimer sank into the chair with a new sort of docility. This illness and the hours of reflection that had come to her with convalescence had lessened her sense of self-importance materially. It seemed highly probable that the world, and even White Cliffs, would have gone on even if she had not.

"I think I should like to hear Dick's letter again," she said, then smiled at Rafe's comical expression. "I know I have heard it five times, but it is good to hear of the clouds breaking away and the sun shining on them all down there. And, Raphael, I think it will do me good to humble myself before Dennis and before John's wife."

"I don't think they would want that, mother," said Rafe, with a gentleness born of pity for the sharp self-rebuke in the old woman's tones.

"Yes, yes! or at least I will want it. I kept Dennis from marry-

ing that noble girl for years; and—and—Raphael, if I had not repeated to John the words I heard that fiend Céleste use, the very first night poor Nora spent at White Cliffs, he would not have been so supine afterwards. I made him believe the child Ninette was Nora's daughter and not her niece. I have been a bad, hard-hearted old woman, and don't deserve to have lived to see the two houses of White Cliffs and Glenburnie so blissfully united."

"Thank God, they are united at last!" said Rafe, bowing his curl-crowned head reverently.

"Read me Dick's letter again, Raphael," she demanded, with a touch of the old imperiousness.

"I can repeat it to you," said Rafe; "I know it by heart; but Lorrie has gone over to Glenburnie to read it to Cato."

"Just like him," said Mrs. Lorimer, with a proud smile.

"Just like him," Rafe echoed, cordially. "Well, Dick says that the whole crowd, himself excepted, seemed disinclined to return to Glenburnie and White Cliffs immediately. They have all gone through so much that Fairbanks thinks they can best recover their equilibrium by travelling a month or so. They are in Boston by this time."

"And Dick?"

"Fairbanks begged him to take charge of the furnishing of sister Ida's suite. He wants the rooms the old gentleman occupied so long, beautified for Dennis and his wife. Dick will be up on the Sherlock and bring the decorators with him."

"'Sister Ida.' That sounds sweet, Raphael."

"I love to say it over and over again," the boy said, blushing like a girl. "She is such a grand woman, mother. And there are so many clumsy men between the two families. We need her."

"I thought of that so often," said Mrs. Lorimer, humbly, "when I lay there waiting for the summons. Yes, she is a grand woman; and I will be proud to call her daughter."

"You have had a daughter all along, mother."

"John's wife. Yes. But I am wiser now than I was when John brought her here. I hope they won't tarry very long, Raphael. I grow restless already."

But they did. They tarried until the wild azaleas and the yellow jasmine and the purple-eyed periwinkles were tumbling over each other in fragrant chaos adown the slopes of Dry Bayou; until the pink tint of health and happiness had come back to the faces of two dear women; until Sibley Fairbanks began to find in his child balm for the unjust treatment he had endured at the hands of the world; until old Glenburnie, resplendent in its fresh beauty, was ready to open its welcoming portals to them.

It was on the first night of Nora's return that the mistress of White Cliffs, following her to the old bedroom where two years before she had given her such a doubtful welcome, folded her in her arms and made a full confession before asking God's blessing on their reunited circle.

It was well done, and fully done; for neither bane nor blessing ever fell lightly from the lips of the mistress of White Cliffs.

THE END.

John A. Cockerill.

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE FUTURE.

[JOURNALIST SERIES.]

THE newspaper has become already so essential a factor in the public and private life of the United States that it is to-day the only trustworthy medium of communication between the sovereign people and their official servants. Through it alone do the office-holders learn the will of their masters, the people. This seems to be the greatest function now filled by the newspaper press. That it does fill this function, and so executes the highest duty and privilege of its existence, cannot be doubted, since eminent instances in the memory of all warrant the conclusion that when a newspaper ceases to speak for that portion of the public, greater or less as it may be, which has been represented by it, the importance and influence of the newspaper disappear.

If to serve the public good be the loftiest ambition at which the successful daily journal may aim, a mission only secondary in importance to this is inevitably and most successfully fulfilled at the same time. And that is the mission of obtaining with scrupulous care and universal vigilance and of carefully preparing and fearlessly presenting to the public all that is and ought to be *news*.

The progress that has been made in these directions may best be inferred from the media of communication between the general public and the sources of news and instruction which have been swept away by the influence of the daily press, such as, for instance, the lecture-

platform, the "Village Oracle," and the Oldest Inhabitant. There was a time when the farmer, the laboring-man, and the small shopkeeper looked to the rostrum for their annual instruction and entertainment, to the "Village Oracle" or Oldest Inhabitant for their opinions and prophecies, and to the local politician, whom we now call a "boss," for their schooling in public questions. All this has to a very large extent been abolished. The most brilliant lecturer in the world can no longer compete with the morning newspaper. The Oldest Inhabitant finds himself ruthlessly *functus officio* by the simple process of learning from his newspaper that there are in different parts of the country ever so many Older Inhabitants. The day of the political boss who can flagrantly defy public opinion and command and receive the support of honest men irrespective of his moral and actual deserts is absolutely past. Doubtless when the newspaper has reached its perfect development it will have accomplished even greater results on lines parallel with these,—but not more astounding.

If this is due to what the newspaper is now and has been,—and it is doubtful if any successful newspaper ever stands still, since the very nature of its existing prosperity demands improvement,—the question at once arises, What will the perfect newspaper of the future be? If it grows, as it must, in importance, in influence, in the ability to achieve great objects for the public good, will its mechanical growth and development and its facilities for reaching a growing public be improved in proportion?

In local and municipal affairs the influence of the daily newspaper was never so great as now. The cities of the United States will grow, our communities will expand in all directions, our civilization will perfect itself in other directions, our average standard of public intelligence—which is now greater than that of any other country—will reach a higher level. The newspaper must grow in proportion, and will inevitably lead the procession, instead of being dragged up by the force of a popular determination. It is actually impossible now for an openly wicked, dishonest, or base man to be elected or appointed to any office of consequence anywhere in the United States. It has not been very many years since it was not possible to make this statement. The change is directly to be ascribed to the influence of daily journalism. The thin veneer of social polish, the public protestations of virtue, and the sanctimonious wearing of white robes in high places, no longer serve to conceal the rottenness within. No other power than that of the press ever would or could have produced this result. The good achieved in this direction alone is incalculable. The direct and inferential influence of such a newspaper press upon the morality of the citizens at large, and especially of those who, but for its earnest insistence upon honor and honesty in office, would be compelled to fall under the example and teaching of corrupt men, is a fruitful and profitable channel for thought. What higher goal could any individual or agency have attained?

The newspaper has become tacitly acknowledged to be the administrator of all public trusts. The circulation of the newspaper press, collectively, has now reached such tremendous proportions that its

constituency is almost coequal with what we term "the public," the body governed and taxed through the instrumentality of certain of its individuals whom it designates for that purpose and over whom the newspapers help it to keep watch. How else is it conceivable, under a scheme of government as simple as ours seems to be, relatively, and yet as complex as it is in reality, for the public to keep track of the doings of its official agents, now numbered by the hundreds of thousands in the United States? A defalcation in a frontier post in the far Northwest, when it has been telegraphed to hundreds of newspapers and has fallen under the eye of thoughtful men in the largest cities as well as the smallest hamlets, has from that very fact ceased to be a semi-private or personal affair, and has become an object of public concern, to the correction and punishment of which the attention of the central government itself at Washington is instantly demanded by public opinion. In such a vast country as that over which we are pleased to say the President of the United States "rules," there is no way other than through the medium of the daily journal of keeping all parts of the machine in the necessary electrical contact with each other and with the central representative governing bodies.

In no way, perhaps, are the people of the press kept in more immediate touch with one another than by the letters from its readers which every useful newspaper delights to receive and publish for the benefit of the public. In no more immediate way may the public pulse be touched; for these letters are the spontaneous testimonials of the readers to the forcefulness of the journal which they read, whether they approve or condemn its course.

In national affairs, as well as in those of the municipality and smaller locality, it is difficult to form a fair idea of the tremendous leverage of the press. To take an illustration: the facts seem to warrant the assertion that the course of the New York *Times* during the Tilden-Hayes contest of 1876 changed the current of American history. Had the *Times*, then probably at the zenith of its influence as a Republican newspaper, not made so bold and apparently earnest and conscientious a claim that Rutherford B. Hayes was elected President by virtue of having received the electoral votes of three Southern States which in reality should have been counted for Tilden, as most people then thought, Mr. Tilden would in all probability have had those votes added to his column when the calm, judicial frame had again fallen upon the public mind, and have anticipated the return of the national Democracy to Federal power by eight years. That is merely one illustration. Others may readily be found.

The editorial pages of a dozen American newspapers, each standing conspicuously for its own city or community, as well as for its own area of cognate communities or States, are eagerly, often fearfully, read by the representatives in office of the American public. That there will be any marked change in the general form and method of American government is not probable.

It is therefore improbable that this loftiest function of the American press will in any great measure be varied or departed from. Its own importance must be constantly supreme.

As the influence of the daily journal for all that is good must from the very nature of the case continue to grow on all sides, the instrumentalities through which the newspaper exercises that influence must, as a matter of course, grow proportionately in number and development. It is exceedingly unlikely that during the remainder of this century at least there will be any marked deviations from the general form and arrangement at present in use by the best newspapers on this continent. Changes there must be, in time, in all respects, methods, and instruments, but the present state of mechanical perfection which has been attained by the higher exponents of the newspaper art is such as to preclude any significant and startling changes in the near future. What those changes will be in the number, size, quantity of columns, quality of matter, and mechanical device, is a fruitful subject for speculation. I will touch upon it farther on. Those would require other changes also in the distribution, number, and general arrangement of the workers. In time, no doubt, a single great newspaper may be compelled to employ hundreds where it now finds work for scores of men and women. That there can be any great improvement in the *morale* of the mass of working journalists, in their audacity, courage, intuitive "nose for news," instinctive loyalty to the newspaper, not the man, and patient endurance of privations and lack of appreciation which would discourage almost any other class of workmen, is hardly to be expected. It seems, indeed, hardly possible.

The achievements of the heroes of the daily newspaper, in their own sphere and in the nobility and courage with which they fill it, whether it leads them to the court of St. James or the police court, are not likely to be surpassed soon. The adventures of and public benefits accomplished by the war correspondents alone, within the memory of young men living, form a single chapter in the great volume of heroism. As the war correspondent was unknown a generation ago, so new species of newspaper heroes may spring to the front a generation hence. But they must all be animated of necessity by the same dauntless devotion to duty and remorseless struggle for success as those who have already resulted in raising journalism abreast of, if not above and ahead of, most of those professional pursuits which absorb the energies and reward the labors of thoughtful men and women. How insufficient and inadequate and often grudgingly given are these rewards in journalism we are often reminded. No greater reproach has attached to an honorable vocation than that originality of thought and skill and courage of execution which in any one of the half-dozen other pursuits of human action would have resulted in making their possessor rich and famous, have in journalism redounded altogether to the name and coffers of the capitalist, leaving the rightful reaper of the reward barefooted and hungry on the threshing-floor! But that this condition of affairs is changing, none conversant with the facts can deny; and that still greater changes for the better must appear is equally sure.

The day of the long-haired, unkempt, wild-eyed journalistic genius, whose laundry-bill bore the proportion of one in ten to his account at the grog-shop, who dashed off a brilliant *jeu-d'esprit* on Monday or

perpetrated a wonderful stroke on Tuesday and spent the rest of the week drinking and talking about it, has vanished far into the dim distance, so far that it can never by any possibility return. There is already an *esprit de corps*, a common fellowship, a concrete self-respect, and a general striving after the good of all and the betterment of the profession, which have worked wonders in the last decade, and before the century closes may yet be expected to accomplish still more in raising the general average of the newspaper worker to that higher plane of excellence, of public and private usefulness, which has already been attained by leaders here and there. From these heights helping hands and encouraging words are extended to the struggling brethren below.

The means through which this result has been accomplished is the Press Club; and I firmly believe that the Press Club of the future, and especially the Federation of the Press Clubs now so happily begun, will render greater service to the profession of journalism than any and all other forces combined.

While the position of the American journalist has so changed for the better as to be a matter of marvel to himself and his friends, the status of his brethren in other English-speaking countries, and especially on the Continent, is by no means all that could be desired. As surely as the Republic of the United States is to be the great nation of the earth at no distant date, even if it be not so now, great in the broad democracy of its government, in the simplicity of its institutions, in the opportunities it offers alike to rich and poor, native and foreign-born, great in the average intelligence, education, refinement, and morality of its people, and greatest in its newspaper press,—so surely will that newspaper press stand at the head of journalism in all countries. That much, indeed, has been achieved already. In number and influence, magnificence of equipment and alertness of resource, the American newspaper is now far ahead of any and all competition. Great Britain may have its London *Times*, but the United States has its *Times* in every city. When Lord Palmerston used to drive by for Mr. Delane on his way to the Park in the afternoon, that he might put himself in touch with all great questions of the day by an hour or two of social chat with the editor of the London *Times*, he unconsciously foreshadowed the position which the great daily newspaper was soon to take and hold in the esteem of all public men.

It was the man whom he sought. The newspaper influence of to day is abstract, disconnected from the identity or personality of any individual, and this tendency to impersonality, to the constitution and exercise of one mighty potentiality irrespective of any one man or any one dozen men, will, I believe, be one of the most marked characteristics of the journalism of the future.

The London *Times* goes on from one administration, from one decade, to another, from one editorial tenure to another, with no palpable diminution or variation in the weight and consequence of its thunderous voice. So must it be with the great perfect newspaper, towards the production of which scores of millions and thousands of men are working and striving. There can be no more Delanes; the newspaper

has outgrown the ideas of individuality of any one man. With the growth in impressiveness and importance, abstract and concrete, will come the diminution of individual consequence. The editor must become more and more an anonymous inaccessible entity. He will simply be the engineer who has charge of the locomotive for one "run" or for one day. His personality will change perhaps from morning to evening and from week to week, but while on duty, whoever he be, he must keep an intelligent hand on the lever. The firemen, conductor, brakemen, may all change too; but, whatever comes, the train must sweep on down the grooves of progress.

The circumstances under which Mr. Delane became editor of the London *Times*, and the exact limitations of the function which he filled so ably in that establishment for so many years, are worthy, it seems to me, of a passing note here. He was the libel-preventer. Having consulted him once whether or not a certain publication was libellous, Mr. Walter, the proprietor of the paper, grew unconsciously into the habit of consulting him, and after a while asked Mr. Delane if he would not agree to go to the office every evening at eight or nine o'clock, after most of the matter was in type, or even later in the evening, after the debates in the House of Commons were over, and go carefully through the proofs for the purpose of elision, concentration, and suggestion. It was thus that Mr. Delane edited the London *Times*. He was a tremendous suggester. He could talk on a half-dozen subjects with a half-dozen different men, in the selection of each of whom for his best work he had used his own keen intelligence, and so waked up their intuitions, inspired their imaginations, refreshed their memories, as to produce the best results. Never writing a line himself, he contrived in this way to publish a newspaper which for its own public and in its own chosen scope was the greatest that could have been produced.

What better illustration could there be of the vast improvements recently made in the mechanical and editorial departments of a great American newspaper than the present constitution of the Chicago *Herald* in the World's Fair city? No building in the world is probably so thoroughly adapted for the purpose for which it was erected. Certainly no home of industry is so effectively and at the same time so magnificently equipped. What would an *ante-bellum* journalist say to a business office with three thousand six hundred square feet of floor-space, flanked by sixteen columns of genuine Sienna marble, and with entrance doors lockless and keyless which can never be closed, summer and winter, morning and night, day in and day out, through the year? What would the old-time "typo" think of a composing-room with its walls of white enamel, its quadruple cast-iron type-stands with cases for one hundred and eighty men, its electric calls connecting each case with the copy-box, its aerial railway conveying advertising matter up to the business office, its separate clothes-closets for one hundred and sixty men, its extensive reference library for the use of the proof-room, its marble closets, filtered ice-water coolers with solid silver, gold-lined drinking-cups, its three hundred and forty-eight incandescent electric lights and marble-topped lunch-counters and tables? What would

have been thought of marble bath-tubs for the stereotypers?—of a great central library for the editors and reporters, around which are arranged a score of handsome editorial rooms, each connected by copy- and speaking-tubes with all the others? What would the old-time journalist, with his long hair lingering affectionately on his greasy coat-collar, say to a publisher's apartments in which all the metal fixtures are oxidized silver and all the wood-work of solid mahogany? What would the old-time hand-press foreman think of ten Scott-Potter presses in a straight line, operated by a single line shaft one hundred and twenty-four feet in length?—of marble clothes-closets and bath-rooms for all employees, and a constant flow of cold, clean water, day and night, in every room from an unfailing artesian well?

And yet is there not good reason to believe that in some respects at least the newspaper of the future may as far surpass its forerunner of to-day as the Chicago *Herald* building of to-day has surpassed the cheap and dingy newspaper building of twenty years ago?

There is no more inviting field for speculation, in this direction, than that which deals with the question of newspaper supply and distribution. Pneumatic tubes, and perhaps a parcel delivery service, will do much to speed the delivery of the newspaper to its city patrons. Special trains from great newspaper centres to distributing points a hundred or two hundred miles away are not only no longer novelties, but have already become necessities; but why should it require a stretch of the imagination to suppose a series of pneumatic tubes radiating from New York city to Boston, Buffalo, Rochester, Albany, Troy, Trenton, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Wilmington, and Harrisburg, by the use of which one great morning newspaper could be printed in the city of New York complete in its news and news-editorial and feature pages, leaving only the local pages and local-editorial columns to be supplied in the branch offices in each of those cities and from them distributed by a subordinate series of tubes, under a different name, to a semi-local constituency surrounding each of those subordinate centres?

The newspapers of New York can now, on the morning of their publication, reach nearly four million readers in the State of New York, and going outside of the State limits can find their way into the hands of more than seven million readers by noon on the day of publication. Yet it is pretty certain that the aggregate number of the issues of all the morning papers published in New York city at present is not one million copies. What vast strides remain, then, to be made in this local field alone before the goddess of Journalism plumes her pinions for new flights!

John A. Cockerill.

THE STREAM'S SONG.

WHAT sings the stream?—Ask him whose heart is sore,
"Woe," he will answer, "is the song thereof;"
Ask him whose heart with joy is brimming o'er,
And he will tell thee, "Love."

Clinton Scollard.

THE INDIAN'S HAND.

THE men had driven away. Their carts and horses disappeared behind the roll of the low hills. They appeared now and then, like boats on the crest of a wave, farther each time. And their laughter and singing and shouts grew fainter as the bushes hid them from sight.

The women and children remained, with two old men to protect them. They might have gone too, the hunters said. "What harm could come in the broad daylight?—the bears and panthers were far away. They'd be back by night, with only two carts to fill."

Then Jim, the crack shot of the settlement, said, "We'll drive home the bears in the carts."

The children shouted and danced as they thought of the sport to come, of the hunters' return with their game, of the bonfires they always built.

One pale woman clung to her husband's arm. "But the Indians!" she said.

That made the men all laugh. "Indians!" they cried; "why, there've been none here for twenty years! We drove them away, down there,"—pointing across the plain,—"to a hotter place than this, where the sand burns their feet and they ride for days for water."

The pale woman murmured, "Ah, but they returned."

"Yes," cried her big husband, whose brown beard covered his chest, "and burned two cabins. Small harm they did, the curs!"

"Hush," said the pale woman, pressing her husband's arm; and the men around were quiet, pretending to fix their saddles as they glanced at another woman, dressed in black, who turned and went into her house.

"I forgot her boy," said the bearded man, as he gravely picked up his gun.

They started off in the morning cool, towards the mountains where the trees grew. And the long shadows lessened as the sun crept up the sky.

The woman in black stood silent by her door. No one bade her good-by. The other women went back to their houses to work. The children played in the dust; clouds rose as they shouted and ran. A day's freedom lay before them.

But the woman in black still stood by her door, like a spectre in the sunshine, her thin hands clasped together as she gazed away over the plain towards Mexico.

Her face was parched and drawn, as if the sun from the sand had burnt into the bone. Her eyes alone seemed to live; they were hard and bright.

Her house was a little away from the rest, on the crest of a hill facing the desert plain.

She had heard the words of the bearded man: "Small harm the

Indians did." Had he forgotten her boy? How could he forget, while she was there to remind them of the dead? Near her house was a small rock roughly marked. The rude letters "Will, gone, '69," she had cut on it with her own hands. It marked the last place where her boy had played. She remembered how she went away softly—so he should not cry to follow her—without a word, without a kiss.

Here her hands beat the side of the house.

"Oh to have that kiss now and die!" But she had gone, unthinking, up the road where the pale woman lived, then a rosy-cheeked happy bride, not a widow like herself. They laughed and discussed the new-comers at the settlement. It was a holiday, for the men were away over the hills, cutting down trees to build their houses with.

As they talked there idly, they heard what they thought was the shrill bark of dogs running up the hill. Startled, they went to the window. Round the curve of the road came horses wildly galloping, and upon their backs—— Here the pale woman shrieked and fled. They were Indians, beating their horses with their bare legs, their black hair streaming in the wind.

"THEY WERE INDIANS."

Like a flash, she had bolted the door and barred the shutters as they galloped up. She turned then. Through the open back door she saw the women run screaming up the hill, their children in their arms.

Their children! Where was hers? She stopped as if turned to stone, then undid the door.

They dragged her out by the wrists, by the hair. She fought with them stronger than ten men. But there were twenty; she was alone. The little street was empty. They strangled her, beat down her face, dragged her upon a horse, and, with her crossways on the saddle, galloped up and down, as they fired the cabins and the sheds. Her hands were shackled, and her eyes blind with blood, but she thought only of her child. "Where could he be?"

There were gun-shots. Down the hills like mad came the white men for their wives and children.

Then the Indians turned back toward the plain. They rode past her house.

There, where she had left him, stood the child, dazed with surprise. She held out her arms tied together and called to him to come.

"Fool! Fool!" Here the woman in black struck her temples with her hands. "Fool!" Why had she not galloped by and never noticed him?

But she begged, caught at the horse's head, struggled to get to him; and the Indian stopped for a moment in his flight and caught up the child and went on.

Then the thought came to her of the end of that ride,—what was to come—after. And she tried to drop the boy, to let him slide gently to the ground; but the Indian held them fast.

Behind, nearer, came the following men, louder the guns. The horse she was on snorted, staggered under the weight of the three, and as they reached the plain the child was torn from her, she was pushed away. But she rose and staggered after them amid the blinding dust. They must take her too. Sobbing, she called to them as she stumbled on. Many times she fell. Then she could go no more.

That was all. Her story ended there, with the thundering of horses' hoofs and the taste of dust in her mouth. They found her there unconscious. Her friends tended her. When she came back to life she asked no questions, but left her neighbor's house and came to her door, where she was standing now, and gazed away over the sand where *he* had gone, down towards Mexico.

The years went by, and she was still alone in the house where *two* should have been. And now far off she saw the dust blowing in a long, rolling, pinkish line. But the dust blew so often, and nothing came of it,—not even the Indians.

The boy she knew was dead, but they—his murderers—remained, somewhere.

If she could have one now in her power!

The woman in black pondered, as she had so many times, how she should torture him. No pain could be too horrible. She looked at the fire in the stove, and piled on the logs,—the logs that were brought with such trouble from the mountains where the trees grew. She could not make it hot enough. She dropped on her knees and watched the iron grow red. And the letters of the maker's name stamped on it grew distinct, and the word "Congress," half defaced,

and the figures "64." Ah, those letters! she could have kissed the spot, for her child had touched it. Charmed by the glow, when left alone, he laid his baby hand flat on it, and burned deep into the palm were those letters, "S S, 64."

She would know him among a million by that mark.

But he was dead. The Indians remained.

The woman in black stood up. Why should she not go to them? There were pools in the plain where she could drink. That would be enough.

The men were away; the women were at work. Who could stop her?

She put on her bonnet and started off down the hill through the green bushes. The air was still crisp, though the sun was hot.

The desert must have an end. She would keep on to Mexico. She walked quickly, and her dress grew gray with dust, and the air scorching, as she reached the plain. But she kept on, and only looked back once at the house on the hill, and at the window where the pale woman sat.

The dust choked her, and she stumbled, and the sole of one shoe came half off, and slapped, and banged, and delayed her as she walked. She tore it off and went on, but the sand cut and burned her so that she sat down and wept, and wanted to go back for her other pair, the ones she wore on Sundays. The hill, though, looked so distant that she wearily got up and went on, on, till she could go no more, and crept under the shadow of a rock. There was no water near. Her throat was parched, and her temples beat wildly. She must go back and start again, strengthened, fortified. She would start to-morrow, or at night, when the cool would let her get too far to return.

By slow degrees she dragged herself up the hill. The pale woman came out of her house, and nodded, but the woman in black did not smile in return. She closed her door, and went up to her bed, and fell on it, and slept, amid the buzzing of the flies and the fitful flapping of the window-shade in the breeze.

The pale woman sighed and glanced across the plain. The roll of blowing dust was larger, and more regular, and nearer. The woman shuddered as she watched it creep slowly along behind the sand mounds. "It always blows," she said to herself, "but not like that, so steadily, so even." She strained her eyes, but there was only dust to be seen. Then she thought of a telescope that belonged to the minister's wife, who came from a seaport town, and ran to fetch it. The two women came out with it together, the minister's wife laughing at her friend, she was such a timid thing!

But the pale woman was paler than ever, and trembled so she could not steady it. The laughing one looked through it, and laughed no more.

"I see a head over the mound there," she said.

The pale woman shrieked.

"They are miles away. We may have time."

"For what?"

"To get away."

"They may be friends——"

"They are Indians! White men would not live through that sand. We must go to the woods. Help me. Warn the women. Gather the children. Come."

She rushed into her house. The other still stood and looked.

The dust-cloud was a little nearer. In a moment all was wild confusion, names were called, but not loudly, girls sobbed, some carried their little treasures, mothers held their children. All gathered together, hidden from the plain by a house.

The pale woman led out her father, then ran to her neighbor's door. She opened it, and called clearly, but softly, "Mary, Mary." There was no answer. The woman in black, on her bed, slept on. Her neighbor hesitated, then hurried after the others, as they ran up the low hills towards the mountains, where their men had gone.

The dust-cloud grew nearer. Now and then a head could be seen. But all was as still as the grave. The woman in black slept heavily, and dreamed that revenge had come at last,—that in her hand she held an Indian's head.

The window-shade flapped loudly, and she woke with an apprehension crushing her. She went to the window and looked out. There was no blowing dust upon the plains, and the street was empty. The doors of the houses stood open; a shawl lay in the middle of the road. The woman leaned out and looked towards the woods.

She saw on the crest of a hill the white skirts of the flying women, and then, below, down the road, her ears sharpened, her heart tightening, she heard the soft, regular thumping of horses' feet.

Then she *knew*.

She sat on the edge of the bed. This was what she had waited for! Was it her turn now?—or theirs again?

She could kill *one*.

Where was her gun?

She had loaned it to the men.

But her axe,—that was below.

As she started for it, there was a burst of war-cries.

She ran down the narrow stairs, and took the axe from its place on the wall.

They were passing her door. The room grew lighter. She turned. One stood in the open door-way, black against the sunshine. She set her teeth hard, hid the axe behind her skirts, watched him motionless.

He stretched out his hand claw-like, and laughed, his eyes gleaming, as cat-like he moved nearer. A terror seized her: with a hoarse cry, she sprang up the stairs, flinging down a chair as he followed panting.

Quickly she climbed up the ladder to the loft, threw down the trap-door, fell on it, bolted it, waited. All was still. Outside she heard the distant yells. She stooped noiselessly and put her ear upon the floor. There was soft breathing underneath, and through a crack in the floor she saw an eye peering up at her.

She stood a long time, motionless, axe in hand, ready.

Her back was to the bolt, but suddenly she *felt* that there was

something there. She turned softly. A slim brown hand was almost through a crevice in the floor.

She raised her axe. The slender fingers touched the bolt and gently drew it back.

Then with the force of all her hatred, fell the axe upon the wrist. The hand sprang up at her. With a howl of agony the creature fell bumping beneath.

Then all again was still.

Her face was wet and warm with the spattered blood.

Outside she heard the crackling of a burning house, then gun-shots far away, and distant shouts. On tiptoe she went to the garret window, and peeped round its edge. Over the hills, quite near, she saw the men returning. One house was blazing,—the minister's. The Indians were retreating. Near her door, grazing, stood a riderless horse. *She* knew its owner. As they rode past, they caught at it, but were stopped by a shout from her door. An Indian rushed out, handsome, young, holding aloft a bare right arm without a hand. In his language he shrieked to them for revenge, pointing up with his red wrist to the attic where she stood.

The eyes of the woman shot fire. She leaned far out and shook her fist from the garret window.

"One Indian at least!"

She hurled the axe at them. It fell far short. They fired as they passed, but none hit her. Nearer came the men.

The wounded man leaped to his horse, and with a curse rode on. The woman laughed as he passed beneath, then sat down in the dusky loft with a red pool at her feet.

Shortly the men returned. Some went by down the hill, after the Indians. Others put out the fire. All was confusion, bustle, shouts.

Then the women and the children came and added to the din, and the men who had followed returned. But the woman in black sat alone in the loft, till she heard the crowd at her door below, and the voice of the pale woman say,—

"Where is Mary?"

She rose and lifted the trap-door,—it was unbolted,—and went down.

The pale woman came to her, but she pushed her aside, and wiped her face with her sleeve.

"Are they killed? any of them?" she said. Her friend answered, "No, Mary, not one." "No harm this time," said the bearded man. "Except my house, it is burned," said the minister's wife. "We'll soon have another."

"I don't mean *you!*" cried the woman in black. "I mean them, —the red devils. Have you got any?—killed any? *You,*"—this to Jim, who never missed a shot,—"you,"—this to the bearded man,— "have *you* killed any?"

And the men answered, "No."

And one man said, "Their horses were faster than ours."

"Not one!" The woman in black drew herself up proudly. "Yes, one; better than killed. Wait." The women shrunk from her as she

"She raised her axe."

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darted up the stair. They looked at each other wonderingly. The woman returned with something in her grasp. She flung it on the table. "It is an Indian's hand. His arm will shrivel to the bone. They will leave him some day to die in the sand." The women shuddered and drew back; the men crowded round, but they did not touch the hand.

"Are you afraid?" said the woman in black. "Afraid of that thing!"

She bent back the fingers and looked in it with a smile of contempt. Her face took an ashen hue: the hand struck the table edge and fell upon the floor. She seemed to be trying to think for a second, then she gave one awful cry, and leaned her face against the wall, with her hands hanging at her side.

"THEN SHE GAVE ONE AWFUL CRY, AND LEANED HER FACE AGAINST THE WALL."

The pale woman tried to go to her, but her husband drew her back, and, with a silent crowd around, slowly picked up the hand.

For a second he hesitated, then did as she had done, but gently. He bent back the fingers of the severed hand and read its history written there, "S S, 64," in white letters on the palm.

He remembered then how, twenty years ago, when she brought the child to him, he had tied its little hand in cooling salve.

It was larger now.

The whisper went around, "It is her boy's hand," and they crept towards the door.

The pale woman took a flower from her dress, one she had put there hours before, and placed it in the brown fingers on the table and went out.

The woman did not stir from the wall. "Leave the hand," she said.

"It is there," and the bearded man closed the door gently behind him.

The woman in black turned. Her hard eyes were dim now. She took the hand from the table and undid her dress and placed it in her breast, and went to the window, and watched, far off, a cloud of dust made golden by the sun, as it rolled away across the plain, down towards Mexico.

Lorimer Stoddard.

"FELICE NOTTE!"

GOD send the little golden bees of sleep
To murmur in the blossom of your ear
Their gentle summer music hushed and deep,
Their softest slumber-songs to you, my dear!

And may the gypsy fortune-telling dreams
Draw you beneath their painted tent and take
Your palm and tell you fortunes,—rosy gleams
Too sweet to be remembered when you wake!

Once may your hyacinthine lids unfold
Bathed in the limpid pallor of the moon,
The happiest stars in heaven may you behold,
And pray, and sigh for joy, and slumber soon.

Irene Putnam.

A SUMMER WOOING.

THE wind went wooing the rose,
For the rose was fair.
How the rough wind won her, who knows?
But he left her there.
Far away from her grave he blows:
Does the free wind care?

Louise Chandler Moulton.

INTERCOLLEGIATE FOOT-BALL.

[ATHLETIC SERIES.]

THE universal interest and enthusiasm that foot-ball arouses throughout all the States in the Union, from Maine to Texas and from the Atlantic to the Pacific, have been the growth only of very recent years. I may say that the way the sport has taken possession of all, young and old, male and female, is something unprecedented, and that it looks as though the question of the day will no longer be free trade or protection, silver or sound currency, but what grounds have the capacity to hold the crowd that is to witness year by year the great annual foot-ball match between Yale and Princeton. Smile if you will, you people of the old school, you that look down on athletics, and above all on foot-ball as the most brutal of all sports since the time of the old Roman gladiatorial combats, the fact nevertheless still remains. The craze to witness the Thanksgiving-Day contest has begun to spread, and no one can tell where it will end. No longer do the families in the land peaceably assemble around the festive board to eat the Thanksgiving turkey and render thanks for the blessings that have been showered upon them during the past year in such abundance. The cry is, "Onward to New York! We must see the great match." What is the reason of this? Simple enough. The merits of the game have at last received just recognition. Foot-ball, though once looked upon as the "most dangerous sport," the "most cruel game," etc., is now regarded as the field on which all the noble qualities that go to make up a true manhood are called in requisition, developed, and perfected.

To attempt to give a complete history of the game would be a task far beyond my powers. I shall endeavor, however, to the best of my ability, to trace briefly and concisely the development of the sport, and to point out its salient and chief features, at the same time adding a few remarks of historic interest.

Before the year 1876 foot-ball as then played was different in almost every respect from the foot-ball one is now accustomed to see. In the above-mentioned year a great change took place, and at the instigation of Harvard, I believe, the American Association Intercollegiate rules as they exist to-day, except as modified from year to year, were introduced and finally accepted. An association, consisting

of Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia, was formed, and foot-ball was put on a firm basis and henceforth assumed a distinctive American character.

Princeton led off by winning the championship in 1877, and held it for two years more. In 1880 she and Yale tied, but the next fall the latter forged ahead, managing also to keep up her success during '82 and '83. Both '84 and '86 resulted in a draw, '85 in a championship for Princeton. Of the remaining five years, Yale has won four times, and Princeton once,—namely, in '89. In addition it should be stated that in 1890 Harvard, though not a member of the association, defeated Yale for the first and only time in fifteen years, and thus virtually was champion. Much discussion has arisen as to the number of championships to which each college is rightfully entitled, but the foregoing statement is, I think, absolutely correct.

At first the teams consisted of fifteen players each. The men had no particular assigned positions, except in so far as certain of them, called forwards, nine in number, played in advance of the remaining six, known as the backs. There was also no regular quarter-back, the nearest of the backs to the ball at the time-being acting as such. The game was distinctively an "open" one, and in consequence abounded in brilliant individual plays. The greatest freedom in the using of arms and hands being permitted, loving, embracing all along the line whenever the ball was in motion, was a customary sight. Long passes were frequently employed, the runner going wherever his instinct or eyes told him he was most liable to gain ground, while those in front endeavored to make a way for him, greatly assisted therein by the laxity of the rule with reference to holding just referred to. The side possessing the ball was allowed to retain it just so long as it could manage to do so, there being no rule in regard to "downs," and the result was that sometimes during an entire half the sphere never once changed hands. To secure the ball was almost as great a triumph as a touch-down is now. Even "safeties" did not count against the side making them, and draw games were of no unusual occurrence.

The system of signalling was crude, imperfect, and simple, and consisted in merely intimating to whom the ball was to go. After that it was every man for himself. The rule in regard to tackling was very strict, it being lawful to seize the runner only between his waist and his neck. The costumes of the men are also worthy of mention. The trousers worn were simply tight-fitting flannel knee-breeches, without a vestige of padding at either knees or hips; while canvas jackets, rubber bands for the ankles, knees, shoulders, etc., were a luxury unheard of. The game was in its infancy, so to speak, and had not yet begun to take on its full growth. It was confined to comparatively few colleges, and its supporters were far from numerous. Soon, however, changes began to be agitated and made, which went on from year to year, till finally foot-ball has become the most intricate, the most scientific, the most manly, and among a large class of people the most popular, sport in existence.

Let us now consider these changes in order. First, however, let *me remark that* all the alterations in the rules and style of game have

been tending in one and only one direction,—namely, to take away as far as possible individuality and substitute in exchange concerted action, or, as it is better known, "team play," bringing about a "closer," more careful, and more thoroughly worked-out and much better executed system of play. One of the earliest and most important changes was the one adopted in 1880 reducing the size of the team from fifteen to eleven men. The effect of the reform was far-reaching. There being fewer places to fill, the standard of players was naturally raised, and the efficiency and quality of the eleven put on a higher plane. In addition, plays now began to be originated which previously had been out of the question by reason of the numbers on the sides and the impossibility of handling so many men so as to bring each one in every move. For example, formerly, owing to the way the rushers stretched across the field, running around the end had been rendered well-nigh impracticable, and breaking the line doubly difficult, in consequence of the number of men to be charged back. Besides, the position of the men became more settled. Princeton played six in the line and the rest back, but no regular quarter, while Yale arranged her men substantially as they are arranged to-day. The next changes were designed to restrict the unbridled holding of one another indulged in by the men and permitted under the rules. For

A SCRIMMAGE.

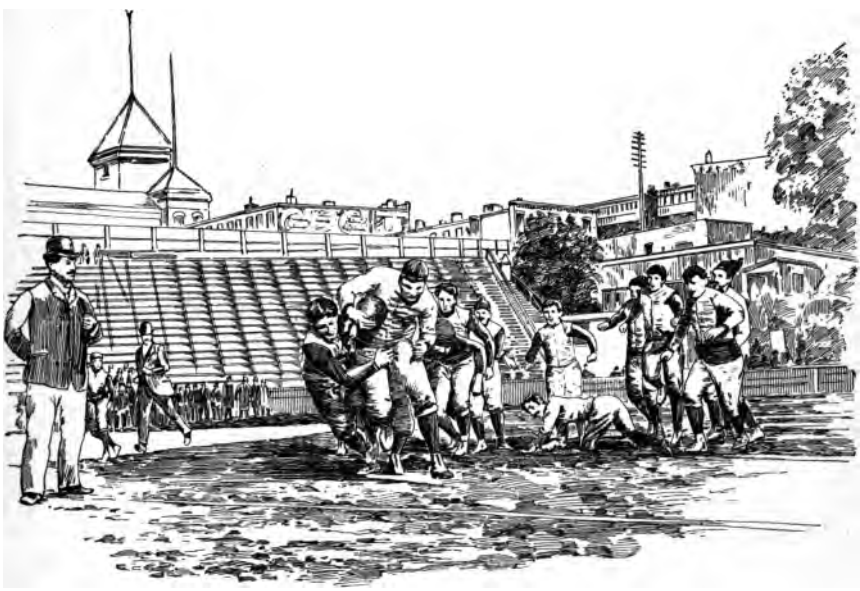
many years there was almost no extreme to which this holding might not be carried, even to the deliberate throwing of one's arms around one's adversary. After a while, however, this unrestrained freedom of action was curtailed, and the players were permitted only to stretch out their arms so as to merely obstruct the other side, but no longer to

seize them in a deathly vice-like grip. But even this failed to answer the purpose, and finally a much more stringent rule was passed, prohibiting the side that had the ball from using in any way whatever either hands or arms in interfering with an opponent. This is the law of the present day; but its interpretation is left entirely to the discretion of the umpire, and in no case is it rigidly enforced. It can never be carried out to the letter, but so long as the spirit of it is obeyed all its purposes are accomplished. Another great fault of the old game, the possibility of one side keeping possession of the ball for any length of time without making a material advance, wise legislation passed from time to time has completely remedied. The first reform occurred about '84 or '85, when it was decided that the side having the ball in order to retain it had either to gain five yards or lose ten in four consecutive "downs." Thus the rule stood till the fall of '87, when the words "lose ten" were altered to "lose twenty." This change was the outcome of experience. It was found that too frequently did a team prefer to go back ten yards rather than give up the ball, and that such loss was not sufficient to compensate the other side. The substitution, however, of twenty for ten solved the problem.

A few other important modifications still remained to be touched upon. First, with reference to penalties for fouls. Formerly the only penalty was to send the offender off the field. This was done only rarely, however, for the reason that it was not until the third warning that such punishment could be inflicted, and it was rather a difficult thing to catch a player violating the rules three times in one contest. The first change did away with warnings entirely, and put in the hands of the umpire almost unlimited power to rule a player off on the slightest provocation. This was found to be highly inexpedient, and in 1889 the fouls to which this extreme penalty was attached were greatly reduced in number, and consist now only of hacking, striking with the closed fist, and unnecessary roughness, while other violations, such as foul tackling, tripping, and throttling, are attended by a loss of twenty-five yards to the side committing them. The minor fouls which one is liable unwittingly to make incur only a loss of five yards or of the possession of the ball. Secondly, as to tackling. The old idea of confining the tackling to that part of the body included between the shoulders and the waist for a long time held its ground, and seemed to be firmly intrenched in its position, but in 1889 the time-worn custom was overthrown, and tackling anywhere between the shoulders and knees permitted. This modification, besides adding exceedingly to the beauty of the game, has also caused a wonderful advance in the defensive work of a team. One of the distinctive features of the game of foot-ball, and an invention almost entirely of the last four or five years, is the elaborate system of signalling adopted by every first-class eleven. In the olden times, as before stated, what signals there were, simply indicated to whom the ball was to go, and there they ended. But as now practised every signal not only tells who is to receive the ball, but also just where he is to go, what particular trick or play is to be attempted, and hence what is the special duty of every man on the team. The importance of this system cannot be

overestimated, and without it that other great offspring of the last few years, of which we shall now speak, namely, "team play," could never have sprung into existence. Team play in the real sense belongs exclusively to the period of the last four years, and has developed with the most extraordinary strides during that time. It has brought about the contraction of the rush-line, the moving up of the backs, and the participation of every man in every move. As now employed, it may be divided into two general heads, interference running around the end, and concentrated charging of the line, or, as it is erroneously but commonly called, "bucking the centre." Both of these methods have been wonderfully worked up.

Interference running around the end had its crude beginning in the fall of 1889, being introduced with great success by the Princeton team of that year. At that time the work of warding off for the runner was left entirely to the backs; but the following autumn Yale, though adopting Princeton's idea, by bringing the rushers also into the play, quite transformed the character of it, and amazingly increased its



A TACKLE.

efficiency. This interference running has imparted greater brilliancy to the game, and to the spectators is one of the most attractive features of it. It is an open question, however, whether it is as effective a play as charging of the line; and this is a rock on which many foot-ball advisers have split. The solution of the difficulty is in the cultivation of both styles, the one equally along with the other, for in a multitude of resources lies the secret of success; but if I were compelled to decide between the two plays I would unhesitatingly choose charging of the line, as by far the more irresistible. I need no better proof in

support of my choice than the recent Yale-Princeton game, where victory hung so long in the balance, inclining to neither side, till Yale adopted the method I have just advocated, and by her terrific charging forced the ball inch by inch and foot by foot nearer and nearer to Princeton's goal line, till finally with one mighty effort she carried it over. Was it her interference around the end that gained that touchdown for her? No. Had she once changed her tactics and tried an end play, she never would have accomplished her purpose. Had she once taken off the pressure and allowed the Princeton line time to gather itself together, the score last Thanksgiving-Day would never have been what it was. There are occasions when victory cannot be secured except by one mighty concentrated effort. At such moments the herculean force of the whole eleven must be directed against one spot at a time, and one only; and this cannot be done otherwise than by charging.

But another element in the game that lends attractiveness to it and at the same time is of vital importance is kicking. Take two elevens in other respects quite evenly matched, the one possessing the better kicker will almost invariably come out victorious. Superiority in kicking also enables a much weaker team to hard press its opponent, and to turn what would otherwise be an ignominious defeat into a closely-contested fight. But one thing bear in mind, that kicking *alone* can never win a game. It may greatly contribute to success, and should therefore be carefully cultivated by every first-class eleven; but to give it undue prominence and to rely on it solely as the means of victory is to commit a fatal error.

Nor should the defensive side of the game be forgotten. It is just as essential to prevent the other side from advancing the ball as to be able to make ground yourself. To be sure, it is scoring that wins, but scoring *more* than your adversary; and the fact that it succeeded in running up a few points is very poor consolation to a defeated team.

A line or so as to the indispensable requisites of a successful player. They may be summed up in the two words confidence and dash. To be a foot-ball player one must execute his every play as if from instinct. This is why a second-year man, as a rule, unless foot-ball is born in one, is better than a first. The latter plays by rules and directions; accordingly his movements are rather ungainly and frequently awkward. His mind, burdened with various matters, works slower than his body. A second-year man or a born foot-ball player never has to stop to think. The principles of the game are a part of himself; his movements are natural, involuntary, and instinctive, and confidence and dash characterize his every action. Let the young aspirant for foot-ball honors take this lesson closely to heart. While on the field never think of yourself or of others, but of the game only. Follow with your eye, mind, and heart every play and every motion of the ball, and strive to be in every scrimmage.

One word more of general advice. The rush-line is the bulwark of strength of an eleven, and should receive by far the greater share of attention. No matter how promising or how good the backs may be,

without a strong line in front of them they will accomplish but little. The main brunt of a game devolves on the rushers, and when they are wanting all is lost.

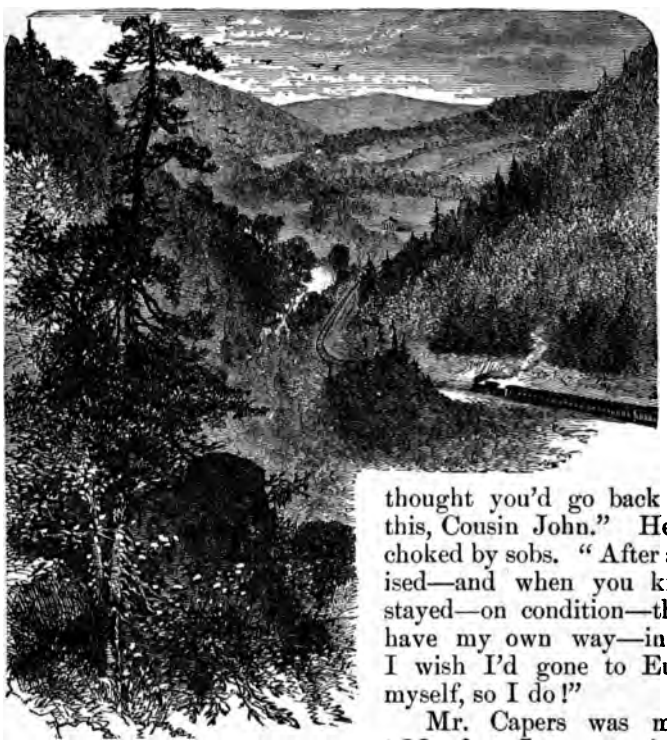
KICKING A GOAL.

So much for the game of foot-ball. I have endeavored to trace its development during the last fifteen years by pointing out the chief changes made in the rules, and the defects at which these changes have been directed, and also to emphasize its important features as they exist to-day. I know I have but partially, if at all, succeeded. The future of the sport is secured. Yale, Princeton, and Harvard stand as its exponents, and to them, especially the first two, is due all the credit for its development. During the last two years Yale has taken the lead, and has seemingly outstripped her old formidable rival Princeton in the knowledge of the game. Circumstances have favored her, in that, possessing from the outset a veteran team, she has been enabled to turn her whole attention to the further perfecting of her style of play; while Princeton, struggling the first year against overwhelming misfortunes, and the second, working with an entirely green set of men, has been prevented from putting into full execution plays to a large extent similar to those employed by her rival. The plays, however, have been carefully thought out, and next year, starting as she will with an old and experienced eleven, Princeton will prove once more to her many friends and admirers that the reputation she has always enjoyed for her pre-eminence and superiority in foot-ball is fully and richly deserved and belongs to her as much by right of her present leadership as of her past well-known career.

Edgar Allan Poe.

A RACE BY RAIL.

I.



A PHILADELPHIA parlor: the hour late: a young lady in quiet mourning and indignant tears: a gentleman, far from young, in evening attire and painful embarrassment.

"I never thought you'd go back on me like this, Cousin John." Her speech was choked by sobs. "After all you promised—and when you knew—I only stayed—on condition—that I should have my own way—in everything! I wish I'd gone to Europe all by myself, so I do!"

Mr. Capers was much moved. "My dear Loretta, nobody has gone back on you, and nobody shall. I am as ready as ever to carry out your slightest wish. Only, he talked so fairly, I thought——"

"Oh, you don't know, you can't understand!"

"Naturally, since I've heard only his side of the story, and not much of that. If you were to tell me yours, now, it might help to avoid further complications."

"Oh, I can't, I can't. And you went and promised him I would see him to-morrow!"

"Not at all. I promised nothing. He said he was coming, and I said he could do as he liked, and so would you. I told him it was a way you had, and that I weakly aided and abetted all your proceedings."

As the sun breaks through the clouds, so did the light of hope dawn again on a visage too fair for woe. "So you haven't gone over to his side? You're not in league with him? Then we'll go off at once."

"Oh, not to-night," this much-enduring man protested. "He can't

be here before ten A.M., and you needn't see him if you don't want to. I'll tell him so."

"That won't do at all," said Miss Joy, decidedly. "We must take the first train."

Her relative shifted his line of argument. "My dear, he seems very determined. He'll rush right after us, probably."

"Then we'll rush right away from him. And granny mustn't know where we are, so she can't tell him."

"Can you go in light marching order, with no baggage but what we can carry in our hands, and put up with such quarters as we get, in the places we may have to stop at?"

"Oh, yes, yes. Anything, so we start at once."

"Very well. Go to bed now, and be up for an early breakfast, and put together a few parcels of the things you'll need most, and I'll express them with some of mine to places where we can call for them. And I'll instruct grandma that no letters or telegrams are to be forwarded, and to tell Mr. Baxter she doesn't know when we'll return, or whether we've gone to Quebec or Duluth or Timbuctoo."

By morning Mr. Capers was resigned to this sudden and afflictive dispensation. It is no light matter to a gentleman of careful habits to start without luggage on a journey of unknown duration and extent, and he felt that his conduct might appear to the eluded Mr. Baxter in a doubtful light; but he was much tickled by the idea of running off with an attractive girl from a far younger and handsomer man.

"Retty," he inquired as they took their chairs in the car, "has your friend any interests in the Coal Region?"

"I don't know. We may as well go there as anywhere. If he comes after us, we can hide behind a breaker, or jump down a mine, can't we?"

"We probably can. But a simpler way of escape has occurred to me. There are men who will execute any little commission, and say nothing. Do you remember the Rev. Clayton Hooper, in Mr. Gilbert's poems, and how he got rid of a rival?"

"No. What do you mean?"

"Why, we might have Baxter assassinated—or, if you dislike bloodshed, abducted. It's a pity Mr. Gowen abolished the Mollie Maguires fifteen years ago. I might join the order, and then his removal would be easy and inexpensive."

This lurid suggestion meeting no approval, he turned to the scenery. "The Park you've seen before, and the bridges, and Laurel Hill, and all these suburbs. The Schuylkill will stay with us through this trip. We are justly proud of it, though as a beverage it is open to more than the Kentuckian objection. We have to dilute it,—or, as a local statesman once observed, 'we put some brandy in, to kill them 'ere majiggers.' The opposite side is the more thickly settled about here. Yonder is the celebrated Manayunk."

"What is it celebrated for?"

"Partly for its factories, but chiefly for a story of Dr. Bethune. He was in the wilds of Vermont after trout, and a farmer asked him where he lived. Mind, he wasn't ashamed of Philadelphia, of course, but he

wished to baffle idle curiosity. So he said, 'Did you ever hear of Manayunk?' The native never had. 'Well, I live about eight miles from there.'"

Eased in mind by her escape from an unexplained danger, Miss Joy dutifully admired the successive courses of the banquet offered to her vision, and her escort expounded Conshohocken and Norristown, pointed out Bridgeport with its antique church, Valley Forge with its sadly heroic memories, and Phœnixville with its bridge and tunnel. "Some of these branch roads," he observed, "are a delusion and a snare. I take back what I said about the Doylestown one. If pursued, we might be caught in a *cul de sac* and cornered; and that wouldn't do at all."

She turned pale. "You don't think——"

"No, I don't. The time-tables, and some previous knowledge on my part, will save us from being cut off in our youth. You have a thick veil and a waterproof, and I've got a false beard in my bag. I trust we'll not have to fight for our lives. When the ruthless foe is on our trail, dodging is our little game."

Pottstown, as he explained, was named neither for its products nor from its first settler, but after him who in A.D. 1720 built its second forge: it is a centre of activities in education and iron. So (more especially as to the latter) is Reading, where our travellers paused in their

NEAR POTTSTOWN.

flight; but the lady was less attracted by this hive of industry than by the views its vicinity affords. She braved the perils of the gravity and electric roads, and imbibed the noble prospect from the mountain-top.

II.

After two days of this, she appeared at breakfast with a serious face. Her manner toward her faithful squire was now much chastened from its former reckless impetuosity. "I know I've been horrid to you, Cousin John, and I'm sorry to be bothering you so. You'll think I'm foolish, but I have a feeling that he's here."

"Where?" Mr. Capers hoarsely whispered, glaring at the harmless

waiter and at the occupants of a table twenty feet off. "Point out the villain, and he dies!"

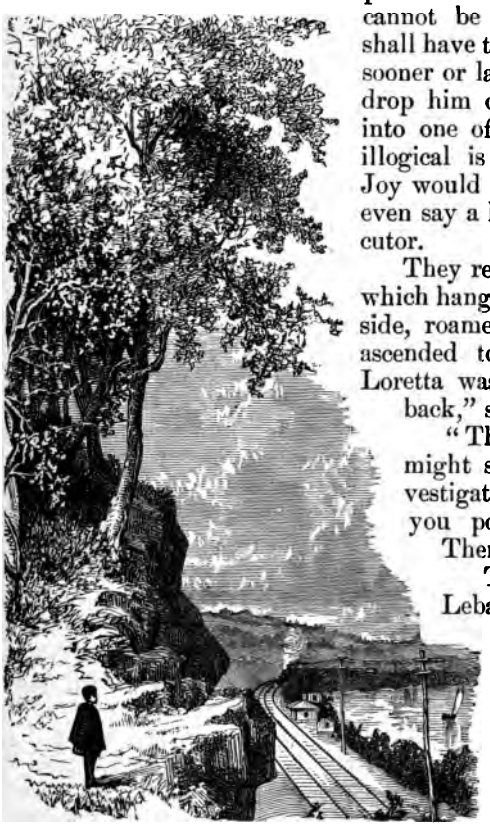
"Oh, don't laugh at me, please. Not in this room, perhaps not in this house; but I'm sure he's after us."

"Then we will fly. Our course, like that of empire, shall be westward." And they were in motion within the hour.

At Sinking Spring he took an observation, and at Wernersville he said quietly, "I think we'll get off here." They stepped from the rear platform as the train moved off, and he added, "Bogey was in the forward car. He can't have seen us."

"Oh, do you think he has put detectives on our track?"

"If he has, you had better reconsider your objection, and let me put an Avenger on his. I fear this feud cannot be settled without Blood; we shall have to resort to Corsican methods sooner or later. It would be so easy to drop him down a mine, or push him into one of these furnaces." But—so illogical is the feminine mind—Miss Joy would not agree to these plans, nor even say a harsh word about her persecutor.



They repaired to one of the hotels which hang picturesquely upon the hillside, roamed through the woods, and ascended to the signal station. But Loretta was restless: "He will come back," she said.

"Then we will push on. We might stop at Womelsdorf and investigate the asylum there. Are you posted on Orphans? No? Then that won't do."

That night they put up at Lebanon. "I'm sorry we have no cedars here to show you," he apologized: "the authorities have let them all die out, and you'll have to take a furnace instead. You really ought to master the rudiments of the iron business."

But this fair offer she declined. "Let us go somewhere out of the way," she anxiously urged, "where he can't find us."

"I have it," he cried after a moment's cogitation. "A branch road starts from here—not a blind one, either—which will take us to untrodden wilds. We'll pretend to be going west by the main line, in case his myrmidons should be about; slip stealthily into the other car; jump out at Wayback, and hide in the forest primeval. These mileage

books are a great invention; when the police inquire for us, the ticket-agents can't tell where we have gone."

The next morning this subtle scheme was safely carried out. "This," said the learned man of the party, "is Bunker Hill—but not the one where Warren fell. Next comes Jonestown, the assistant metropolis of this county: it boasts another orphanage. This creek, the Swatara, supplies the surrounding country with fuel. No joke; look out and see." An old man in a flatboat was painfully grubbing pieces of coal from the shallows. "This is a leading industry of the section. It comes from thirty miles north, in the freshets, and costs them nothing. Here is the last iron-mill this way. The men who run it don't appreciate rural charms, and go to and fro every day."

"How foolish!" the young lady commented. "It is so nice and quiet and lonesome here." Feeling safer now, she made an attempt at general conversation. "Last night, at the table, I heard those travelling men speak of the Dutch belt. What did they mean?"

"It would be hard to say," her adviser musingly replied. "The Hollanders manufactured many articles, but not especially belts, so far as I have heard. Besides, they never came here. Must be a mistake for eastern New York."

They landed at a little station above which the mountain-chain loomed majestic. A boy near by led them across a fence and over a rough field to a plain path through the climbing forest. Up they toiled, the girl sometimes far ahead. At the top they looked over lonely farms, stretching south to the Lebanon Valley, bounded twenty miles away by the Cornwall hills. Behind them a deep and narrow vale, backed by a parallel ridge, showed a few clearings. "That looks safe," said Mr. Capers, when he had found breath again. "Or we might walk along this, barring gaps, to Alabama. I hardly think Baxter would catch us up here; but it gets rougher and higher further on, they say."

"You'd have to get your gun and some blankets first, wouldn't you?"

They rested an hour, giving themselves up to the pure air and the untutored outlook; man and his works shrivelled in the mightiness of Nature. But the demon of analysis returned to vex the scene. "Have you determined yet whether Marriage and Life are failures?" he asked.

"No, I haven't." She turned a tearful gaze upon him. "I don't want to be ungrateful—but oh, please let me be!"

III.

At Harrisburg our friends mounted the terraces which surround the capitol, mildly envied the families whose windows face the lordly Susquehanna, and drove up the river road to where the mountains cross. "You see," said Mr. Capers, "we would have had to climb down here and wade about a mile."

Returning, he sauntered into the hotel office, and presently found his ward. "Retty, it is a good thing to be a bad writer. I defy any-

body who doesn't know my hand to make out what it says, and I've been practising on my signature of late. Bogey's been here and gone, not spotting our names in the register."

"Oh, he will come back! Let us go."

They went. But at Gettysburg their sojourn was unduly abridged. They had not finished shedding the tributary tear and musing on the historic sites when Loretta grasped her companion's arm and emitted an agonized whisper: "There he is!"

THE SUSQUEHANNA.

Luckily, his back was towards them; the recognition, if left to Mr. Capers, would have failed. In this trying moment the spirit of those who fought and fell around that consecrated spot did not sustain its visitors. Basely they skulked behind the monument of Reynolds; craven-like they fled from the field of battle.

The retreating troops crossed the river in good order at Columbia. Halting there for rest and refreshments, the commander observed, "We have met the enemy, and we are not his yet. Where would you like to go now, Retty?"

"My mother went to school at Lititz. Isn't that somewhere about here?"

"It is. We will be there in a jiffy; that is"—he consulted his watch and time-table—"in about three hours. This branch, my dear, is an accommodation road. It justly prefers the safety of its passengers to that frantic and breakneck speed which is the curse of our degenerate age. We are in no hurry, since the vindictive foe is not on our trail at this moment."

Lititz and Ephrata are places dear to the ecclesiastical antiquarian; but the present population is not so large as the passing stranger might suppose, for most of it turns out to see the trains go by. "This is their chief solace," said Mr. Capers. "Many excellent theological treatises and hymn-books were printed here" (they were now at Ephrata): "these are now rare, the sheets having been chiefly employed in the Revolution for cartridges; it was thought they would be more useful in that form. The old monk who once ruled these cloisters is said to have labored under a hopeless passion for one of his nuns; but that cannot be—though the Sisters may have had more of the bloom of youth about them in those days. What is Love, even when mutual? A fortuitous concussion of two particles in blind and misguided pro-

pinquity. Even you and I rise superior to such carnal vanities: how much more a scholar, a saint, a cenobite of old!"

"I don't know, said the girl; "I'm not so sure." But when pressed to define the point she was not sure about, she flatly refused to be more explicit.

Not pausing at Reading, they followed the narrowing Schuylkill thence to Pottsville. "We are now," said Mentor to his fair Telemachus, "in the mighty heart of the anthracite region—you can hear it throbbing all around you—amid a wilderness of collieries and short branch roads. You may never again enjoy such an opportunity to study up this important subject. The output of coal——"

SCHUYLKILL VALLEY, FROM NEVERSINK MOUNTAIN, READING, PA.

"Oh, drop the output of coal, please. I feel as if I didn't want to know the things everybody else knows, or to stay in the places where everybody goes."

"Mr. Baxter, for instance," her tormentor continued. "Yes, I've heard he is a promising and progressive business-man. Singular that you have taken such a mortal dislike to him; he didn't seem to me repulsive. Probably he is simply taking notes and making investments, and not thinking of us at all."

The country about Pottsville is all hills and ridges, with barely space between for the trains to squeeze in and the main streets to huddle; the cross ones have to climb. Our ill-assorted pair, if they had been artists or camera fiends, might have filled their wallets; as it was, they laid up many a cabinet picture, "photographically lined on the tablets of the mind," and kept for the uses of memory. They went about, using alike the natural and artificial means of locomotion. They climbed the steep grade to Frackville, and gazed upon the valley beneath the wondrous Plane of Mahanoy.

Of evenings, having seen his charge in the safe seclusion of her

room, Mr. Capers would peep into the other hotels, to guard against surprises. One night he called her forth. "My dear, don't be alarmed, but the wily foe is on the next corner; he arrived this afternoon. No, he didn't see me, and no blood has yet been shed; you forget my blue glasses and false goatee. If necessary, I am prepared to assume the

WEST SHENANDOAH BREAKER.

miner's humble garb in your service. We can't get off this moment, but we'll don our disguises and go by the first train he doesn't take in the morning. Now let us think out a plan of the road."

"Oh, can't we get somewhere that he won't follow us?"

"We might go to Tamaqua; he'll scarcely come there. Or to Ashland; you've heard of Henry Clay? Or Shamokin, or Shenandoah—no, it's not the one Sheridan rode to. But mark my words; you'll have to murder that man yet—or marry him. This can't go on forever. This strain is telling on both of us. Deep hollows are forming under your violet orbs, and my few hairs are whitening fast. We must do something to get rid of the Avenging Fate that dogs us."

IV.

Space fails us to recount all their wanderings. They passed many a black breaker, and sauntered by brooks whose trout were banished long ago. They climbed hills not a few, and would have descended to earth's bowels but for the lady's veto. They saw the noble bluffs which rise where the twin Susquehannas meet, and gazed on many a scene

where earth's beauty has been marred to elicit her hid treasures. Three times they saw the autograph of their pursuer, as a recent guest or an arrival just before their hasty departure. Twice their eyes, sharpened by practice, caught glimpses of him on the road, in cars halting at stations or passing while theirs paused. After these all-but encounters they doubled, they turned, they twisted, with possibly superfluous caution. So the hunted will wade far in some friendly stream, that the hunter may lose the scent.

At last they came to a region whose paramount attractions they had long postponed. Having followed the dust-heaps of Tamaqua into the lovely valley of the Little Schuylkill, and ridden by the dead tops of ancient trees, protruding sadly from the black hill which covers a farm of the past, through the Nesquehoning tunnel they reached the American Switzerland. Decline as it may from its former note as mother of railway and canal, mountain fortress to protect and foster traffic, Mauch Chunk is still a place to pause at. Our travellers tried the famous Switchback; they threaded Onoko, loveliest of glens, and mounted to the rock which overlooks the wild and narrow valley; they scaled heights less known to the hasty tourist, off the beaten track—outlying patches of beauty, sometimes with a history of their own. Down the river they dashed to Lehigh Gap, where the hardy current, in prehistoric ages, cut its way through the great Ridge. Hence they started on a longer trip northwestward.

In this section, if you are wise, you will secure a seat on each side the car. Between these Loretta darted, keeping the tumbling waters and craggy cliffs always in view. Only for a moment was her attention withdrawn. "Look at those people," she whispered. "Why on earth do they go to sleep, and read their stupid newspapers and novels, *here?* Don't they know that all this is ever so much better than anything they can find in print? Why, if I went by every day, I should always want to look out."

"My dear," said her guide, "they are Philistines—or their education has been neglected. As the Stoic says, teach them better, or bear with them. Look now." They were nearing Penn Haven. "You can't beat this, of its kind, short of the New River in West Virginia. Here, to the left,"—he pointed to the gorge whence issues the roaring torrent of Black Creek,—"is a road we must take some day—if the enemy doesn't catch us." Alas, that bit of country they never saw.

From White Haven to Wilkes Barre two roads scale and descend the mountain. They were on the one less noted for scenery, though every step of the way is worth seeing. "We'll take the other as we go back," they agreed.

The charms of River Street and the Wyoming Valley were not wasted upon Loretta, nor those of the bluffs above Pittston, with their tale of Indians and fleeing hunters. But she would neither go on to Scranton nor linger long in Wilkes Barre. "The big towns are too dangerous," she said. "He's sure to be here to-day or to-*morrow*."

As they strained up the mountain, papers and books were laid aside, and every face turned to gaze on the city at their feet. "The power of fame," Mr. Capers observed; "they've heard it's the proper thing to do just here. This is simply the finest of a series of landscapes; the rest we'll have all to ourselves. See that panorama to the right, properly named Fairview. That's the other side: we're at the top now."

At Glen Summit, just beyond, they paused a day. Here many trains halt for sustenance to the inner man. One had drawn up on the westward track as that which bore our friends began to move. The elder of them fixed his glittering eye upon a passenger who was mounting the steps of the big hotel, and murmured, "Just in time!" The other, though fifty feet away, turned, and recognized his quarry. Forgetful of lunch and luggage, he rushed frantically forward—when a burly philanthropist barred his way, shouting, "Don't do that, man! I will not see a fellow-creature mangled!" The moment's detention was enough; thus empires—and coy mistresses—are sometimes lost. Sounds of wrath and conflict rose upon the innocent air: Mr. Capers, moved by a malignant impulse, leaned far out of window and waved his hat triumphantly at his thwarted rival.

Loretta pulled him back. "Gracious! People will think you're crazy. And you know he'll be after us by the next train." She was on the verge of tears.

"I know a trick worth two of that," the victor panted. "We'll dodge him again!"

And they did. With local knowledge, or patience and leisure, you can swerve and double at will in the coal country: the iron roads intersect and turn and wind in a way to puzzle even the sapient map-maker. There are the high table-lands about Drifton, most select and private of mining towns, and its neighbor Freeland, given to what our cousins across the sea call "publics;" and in the fair valleys beneath are sundry "sporting" hostelries, where a lady may take refuge at a tight pinch. Not far south is Hazleton, metropolis of the lofty wilds, whence you may go whither you will.

"Oh, where are the trees?" cried our young lady, gazing in dismay over the barren plain.

"All transplanted under ground, to keep the mines from tumbling in."

Reassured, they emerged from brief seclusion, and took to the road again, though not by the most familiar ways.

"Oh, can't we stop here?" the girl entreated, as the grand mountain-side opened before them at Quakake.

"Unhappily, there's no place to stop at. This is one of the first views in the State, but the hotel of the future isn't started yet. We can only change cars here; but you will soon be consoled."

Over the trestles of the Catawissa branch they sped—six of them, averaging a hundred feet in height, and long enough to scare the nervous—and through the lonely loveliness back of the Susquehanna. "It isn't a bit like California," said the daughter of the Pacific, "but oh, how pretty it is!"

An hour and a half over less impressive lowlands, as much along the West Branch, and Williamsport was reached. "This is very neat," said the leader of the party as they issued from the hotel park for an

CATAWISSA VALLEY.

evening stroll along one of the prettiest streets in the land; "only they have to buy new carpets after every freshet. Well, we've left the sleuth-hound far behind; he'll hardly come up here,—unless he's interested in lumber. This is the finest town in fifty miles: we'll refit to-morrow, and then rest awhile at a place a little way up country." Yet Miss Joy did not seem entirely happy.

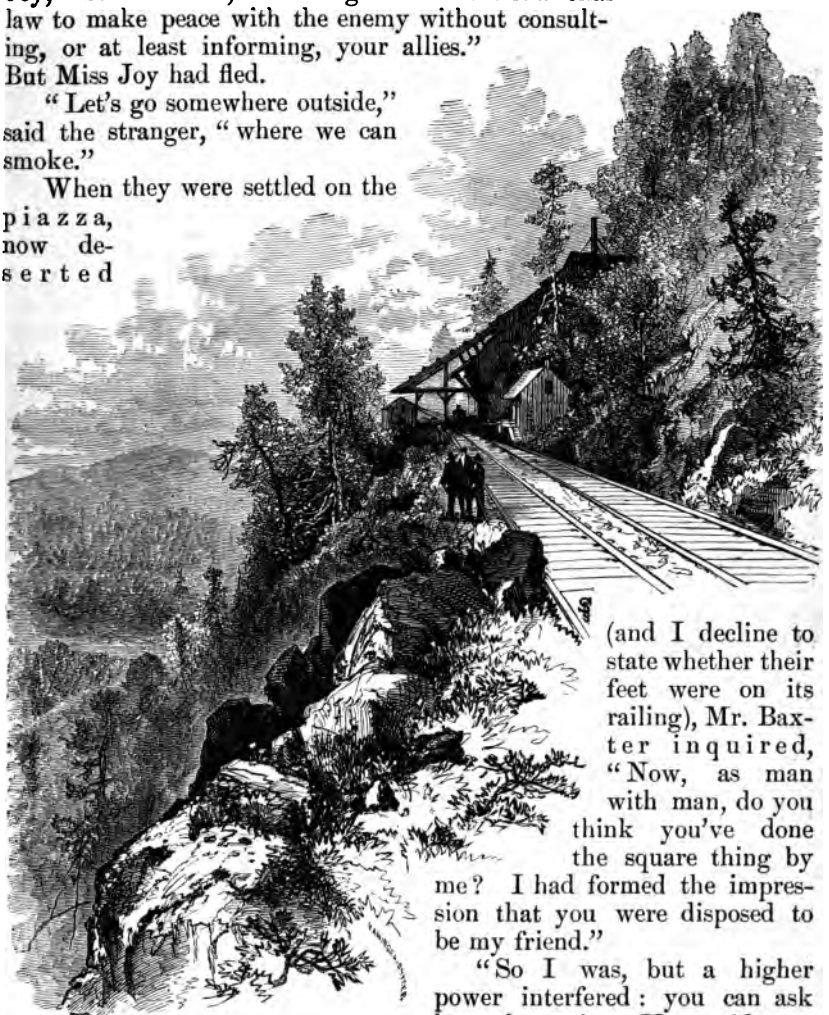
V.

The State of Penn does not abound in lakes, but Eaglesmere is one of the most beautiful. Our travellers had brushed the dust from their garments, and felt themselves again members of society. Renovated and free from care, Mr. Capers sat on the hotel veranda and drank in wisdom from the lips of a local nabob. The evening stage arrived—the electric road from the city was not yet completed—and discharged its load of new arrivals, at whom he did not deign to glance, being immersed in the mysteries of the lumber trade. It was late when he went in search of his neglected ward, and found her—but not alone. She was in deep and apparently amicable converse with a tall, dark, well-made gentleman of about thirty, whose air was resolute and prosperous.

Mr. Capers inserted his hands in his trousers-pockets, and his stare, I am ashamed to say, broadened into a most indecorous grin. "Miss Joy," he remarked, "it is against all international law to make peace with the enemy without consulting, or at least informing, your allies." But Miss Joy had fled.

"Let's go somewhere outside," said the stranger, "where we can smoke."

When they were settled on the piazza, now deserted



(and I decline to state whether their feet were on its railing), Mr. Baxter inquired, "Now, as man with man, do you think you've done the square thing by me? I had formed the impression that you were disposed to be my friend."

"So I was, but a higher power interfered: you can ask her about it. You said you wanted no favors, and I told you she would do what she pleased, and I would help her as long as she wanted me to. Well, that's just what we've been doing. I might retaliate, and ask if you consider it fair to force your society on a lady who has displayed such uncommon anxiety to avoid it; but we'll let that pass, as you seem to have come to terms."

"I should say so. Well, you've led me a dance. I nearly caught you six or eight times; would have done it at Glen Summit but for that old buffer—did you see me thrash him? Oh, the time hasn't been wholly wasted: I've dropped into several things that

promise to pan out well. But this flying about was a crazy business. I say, couldn't you have given me a pointer or two, to cut it shorter?"

"You forget that I was retained by the other side," Mr. Capers answered with dignity. "May I ask what was the original trouble?"

Mr. Baxter's dark cheek flushed a little. "Simply some dashed foolishness—lovers' quarrels, and all that. I suppose I was partly to blame. Let that go; it's all right now. By the way, I'm much obliged to you for taking such good care of her. As you stand sort of *in loco parentis*, you're welcome to inquire as to my standing and character, and so on. Want references?"

"Thanks for the permission," said Mr. Capers, dryly. "I did that long ago."

"Well, then you know that while her fortune might be an object to any fellow, I don't need it. The old gentleman had no objection, and he never would have consented to her marrying a poor man. I had various transactions with him; sometimes we worked together, and once or twice I got the better of him; but he bore me no grudge, for he knew I was a little warmer than he was. That's settled. You understand, I want to take her back with me at once."

"Scarcely. She must have time first to get over her aversion to you. Why, man, I never knew a case of such positive terror, such headlong and agonized flight. I might have thought you were Bluebeard, or the Khan of Tartary, if I hadn't met you. The way she rattled my old bones about is painful to look back on. Besides, the execution must be conducted properly, at her grandmother's, and the old lady will have to be reconciled to it. She regards you as a dangerous and dreadful person."

Mr. Baxter listened to this tirade with bare tolerance—he was a practical man—and on its conclusion said shortly, "Let the lady decide. We'll call her at once."

Strange to say, the lady had not gone to bed; nor did the hunted hare shrink as yesterday from her pursuer. "Retty," said her ex-guardian, "this ardent youth proposes to run away with you right off. Can't you persuade him to wait for the stage to-morrow?"

This young person who bravely conquered her blushes was quite different from the self-willed damsel of a few weeks before. "Isn't it too bad, Cousin John? He won't wait till I'm out of mourning. I can't possibly be ready till Christmas,—or late in the fall, at the very best."

Against this her lover vehemently demurred. "We might split the difference," Mr. Capers suggested, "and call it six weeks."

"It is true," said the ardent youth on reflection, "I have some matters to attend to in Boston and Chicago and New Orleans; and I can run back to San Francisco and arrange for a longer absence. Then I might take you to Europe for a month or two."

"I don't think I care about Europe now. Cousin John showed me the folly of that, when there is so much to see at home. I'd rather go over these roads again, and stop longer at some of the places. You see, Willy, you can complete your coal and iron investments—*and* I'll not have anybody to run away from then."

Frederic M. Bird.

A PROFESSIONAL PLAINDEALER.

THERE is a crying need for a Professional Plaindealer,—some one empowered to tell us those salutary home truths with which our friends are too kind or too cowardly to acquaint us. The moral generalities uttered in lecture or sermon do not answer the purpose by any means: we pass the rebuke on to our neighbor and are self-righteously gratified that his conduct should receive the condemnation it deserves. Nor does public opinion often manage to penetrate the magic circle drawn around us by our egotism. Our faults are dear to us because they are our own, and we can seldom get far enough away from them to perceive their hideousness. We are convinced that our bad qualities "lean to virtue's side,"—even contriving to plume ourselves upon them. Thus we hear people discoursing, with prideful emphasis, upon the obstinacy, or high temper, that has been among their family traits for generations. The dyer's hand not only becomes subdued to what it works in, but at last he grows proud of its stains. Even the worst man has usually some undefined idea that he is a pretty good sort of fellow, if only the world would take the trouble to look at him in the right light. It is the last delusion that human nature loses. Vanity has its uses; but when it reaches a certain point of development it becomes dangerous; and it is there that the assistance of the Professional Plaindealer would be useful.

Frequently it is wealth that hedges in the misdemeanant and prevents him from learning the truth about himself. Few of us like to cast the first stone at a palace window. Many people, indeed, are ready to forgive the millionaire all things, and satisfy their virtue by being especially hard upon the shortcomings of the poor,—like certain physicians who make good the losses sustained from delinquent patients by sending long bills to those who are willing to pay. But more than that, society is pusillanimous, and prefers its safe old method of backbiting to the perils of plain-speaking, even where unimportant folks are concerned. A man, therefore, is seldom scorched by the full revelation of himself as others see him. When asked for a "candid opinion" we shuffle and hesitate, fearing to utter our minds; and so conceit and pretension flourish. The few who do indulge in home truths are so manifestly inspired by ill-nature that the sufferer can, with a clear conscience, accuse them of envy and malice.

On the other hand, the authoritative opinions of the Professional Plaindealer, pronounced calmly and dispassionately, without any possibility that their source could be spite or anger, would have telling force. Twice a year, let us say, this much-needed official might make his rounds,—of course supported by the majesty of the law, else he might die a violent death. Why should we not have a Board of Moral Health, with inspectors authorized to see that each individual keeps his or her spiritual premises in a wholesome condition? The approach of such visitations would probably give the signal for a general house-cleaning; but it would be of little avail: the six months' record would speak for itself. Doubtless the Professional Plaindealer would be hated as much as feared; for he would drag away those rags and tatters of old self-deceptions in which poor humanity tries to keep itself warm and sheltered from the cold, searching wind of reality. Even in the abstract, and putting out of the question those who have reduced mendacity to a science, most of us have to be edu-

cated up to a love of Truth's shining face. The manufacture of fallacies is one of the world's established industries. We gild decay and curtain corruption with cloth of gold,—shocked "if a color not virtuous is frankly put on by a vice."

The Professional Plaindealer will have to cope with those who make their wealth an engine of oppression,—who subordinate everything to the pursuit of money,—who turn their talents to evil purposes, or use beauty as a motive power to push forward unrighteous schemes. And though the grosser offenders may not change their nature, they will amend their conduct for very shame, realizing that the world has found them out. He will unking the usurper, and say, "Mask! I know you" to hypocrisy. At his command solemn humbug will drop the rich vesture that gave it dignity, and show itself the hollow thing it is. The cruel, the unjust, the treacherous, the lustful, will quail as they recognize, in the mirror that he holds up to them, the hideous reflection of their vices. But it will not be the Plaindealer's only function to rebuke and confound the erring. When he has quelled the bumptious and dominated the stubborn, it will be his place to set right those who are not wicked, but only mistaken; to point out the pitfalls that threaten noble souls; to cheer and stimulate the doubter, and inspire the faint of heart with moral courage.

To most of us his visits would be a sharp experience, but even while we smarted under the lash it would be healing to remember that our intimate enemies also had been "catching it," and had heard, in plain, unvarnished terms, those unflattering truths we had never dared to tell them.

J. K. Wetherill.

"JOHN GRAY."

PRAISE is sweet. It is sweet also to have one's praise of others endorsed. To be agreed with is to be flattered. When the conductors of this magazine recorded their conviction that "John Gray" was not only the best work Mr. James Lane Allen had so far produced, but a novel of rare and unique merit, they expected that their conviction would find an answering echo. And so indeed it has proved. Nay, their expectations have been more than realized. The echo —an unusual characteristic of any save metaphorical echoes—has proved louder than the original voice. Things that the conductors thought but hardly dared to utter, because they might seem to be coming in for some share in their own praise, have been uttered by others. *They* never would have said that "John Gray" was the best novelette ever written in America. Others, however, have said it for them, as for instance in the following letter:

"I *cannot* refrain from congratulating you upon your new correspondent and contributor, James Lane Allen. His 'John Gray' is the best novelette yet written in America. The interest in it never flags; its end is not pleasant to the Idealists, but a lesson to the Philosopher. Allen is intensely original, has a robust and yet wide imagination. He is not only a novelist, but a teacher and moralist of the best type. He is true to nature and morality and fact and patriotism. Such a man stands alone, and he is a necessity to our times.

"'John Gray' should, by all means, be put in permanent form. The millions of dollars wasted in foreign missions would be better spent in putting this book by the million on our materialistic and pagan readers and dying nation!

"CASSIUS MARCELLUS CLAY."

AS IT SEEMS.

A Privileged Class.—The Howard Association of London, while admitting that American prisons "are less characterized than British jails by military officialism, excessive secrecy, and the undue exclusion of judicious civilian visitation," finds reason to believe that crime in this country is alarmingly on the increase, and that our methods of treating prisoners do much to promote the evils which they are meant to check.

The first of these contentions it would be difficult to deny. It may be urged in extenuation that we are constantly in receipt of a large foreign immigration, which does not immediately tend to raise the standard of intelligence and character among us. President Eliot, of Harvard, insists that the common schools of Northwestern Europe are better than ours; but this remark does not apply to the Huns, Italians, Polanders, Russians, and Orientals who flock to our shores, and if it be true of the British islands, many who come to us from that quarter seem not to have improved their early advantages. The criminal industries of our imported population are probably out of all proportion to its numbers—and its numbers are great.

Yet it must be owned that we have a large class of non-law-abiding citizens of native birth, especially of young toughs in the cities,—for Mr. Byrnes says that most of our crimes are committed between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five. This might seem a hopeful fact, for to reform your offender you must catch him young, and his punishment is supposed to aim at his reformation. But does it have that effect? In most cases apparently not. The general testimony is that boys go to jail or to a reformatory raw and ductile, after a first offence committed perhaps under stress of passion and temptation, and come out hardened, fixed in principles which are opposite to those of honest people, resolved on and prepared for a career of crime. Unrestricted intercourse with experienced burglars, sneak-thieves, and crooks of every sort has taught them much, and the mildness of their treatment has clothed the prospect of a return to prison with no terrors. From their point of view, what is there to regret or fear? "I often think," wrote an ex-convict to his "pal," "of the bully times we had up at old Uncle Jeff's hotel, and the gay larks we had there at the Y.M.C.A. meetings, putting our heads together and getting up the high old rackets we have had since."

This gentleman not improbably bore part in the aforesaid meetings, and satisfied the chaplain of his sincere repentance; and yet the sermons and hymns failed to reach his case. Neither did the carnal comforts that surrounded him conduce to the public benefit in his reformation. An official of the same State testifies that "Boston provides better bed and board to-day than most of the prisoners ever had before. We cater for their trade. If they come once they are generally sure to come again." The institution facetiously styled "Uncle Jeff's hotel" gratifies its guests with base-ball, frequent lectures, "classical music and minstrelsy, farce and comedy, the banjo and the bones. We strive to give to the criminal all the physical, social, intellectual, and moral advantages that uncondemned persons have." Naturally he will not be loath to return.

Liberty is sweet, but if one cannot crack cribs and pick pockets within the walls, he can at least learn new tricks and advanced methods, to be practised when his time is out. When the exercise of his profession happens to be interfered with by the minions of the law, he has nothing worse to look forward to than a resumption of his studies, with full enjoyment of "all the physical, social, intellectual, and moral advantages." He feels himself a favorite of society, the happy member of a privileged class. Should he be driven to take human life, he becomes the distinguished recipient of extraordinary attention: ladies smother him with flowers and ruin his digestion with culinary offerings. In the unlikely event of his lawyer failing to procure a new trial or a commutation of sentence, he has the consolation of knowing himself a hero, the cynosure of many eyes, the admired model of his old companions and younger brothers. If endowed with a tolerable share of pluck, he goes gayly to the scaffold or the electric chair, having attained the height of his ambition.

The Unprivileged.—Very different is the case of the honest and industrious poor. No paternal government stands ready to supply their wants, to surround them with "all the physical, social, intellectual, and moral advantages." The self-respecting toiler has no reliance but on his muscles and his brain; if these fail, he is slow to seek the charity that degrades. It is his business to support his family: when sickness, accident, or misfortune comes, starvation follows, or the poor-house, which is apt to be a less liberal provider than the jail. Let him break the law, and he is cared for; let his wife and children become thieves, and there is no more vexed question of keeping the wolf from the door. If they are such antique conservatives as to set the soul above the body, the pawn-shop will support them till the room is bare, and then perhaps the district visitor may find them out and report the case before it is a matter for the coroner and the undertaker.

The remedy, if any, seems to lie in levelling down, since just here levelling up would be extremely difficult. Mr. Bellamy's republic is not yet in sight, and the cause of Christian communism moves on with but halting steps. We may not pauperize; we must urge the doctrine of individualism and self-support even to the last ditch. But if we cannot help the honest worker, at least we *can* stop petting and pampering the detected confidence-man, the thug of the dives, and the enterprising but unsuccessful burglar. The Howard Association appears to hit the nail on the head in urging "the necessity of rendering the treatment of criminals *less attractive*" than that of the law-abiding and industrious poor. He who lives by honest toil should not be tempted to envy the scalawag who preys on the community. When the scalawag is caught, what we have to do with him—if his offence is not legally a matter for the noose—is to keep him alive, safe, and at work, to teach him something useful if we can (not necessarily Shakespeare and the musical glasses), and to restrict as far as possible his intercourse with his kind, especially separating him, while young, from those who would be his instructors in crime. It is not essential, nor even desirable, that he should enjoy his confinement: it ought never to be forgotten for a moment that he is there for punishment, that he is differentiated by his own act from honest and decent people. Short of inhumanity, he can and ought to be made to feel that the way of the transgressor is hard, that honesty, or what the law recognizes as such, is the best policy. When tables are turned, when the knave becomes distinctly an unprivileged person, he may find occasion to mend his ways.

Reform by Reaction.—It has been pointed out a thousand times that there is far too much sloppy sentimentality over malefactors. But good nature is the leading American virtue, and our Christian civilization seems to have been more effective in quickening the sympathies than in stiffening the conscience. As a rule, we are more ready to condemn harshness than injustice.

"Tact" and good-fellowship will usually beat brains and character out of sight; a suave scoundrel has more following than Aristides, if Aristides is imprudent enough to say what he thinks of the scoundrel.

The kind of revival we want is a revival of honesty. We are humane enough, most of us; but we might, taken by and large, acquire extensive gains in uprightness without injury to the Constitution or the social fabric.

Why would it not be a good idea to begin by reforming our treatment of criminals? Our punishments in general are too light, too insecure, and they notably fail to convert the offenders. Little Delaware is much berated for that "relic of barbarism," her whipping-post; and yet it would be better if all crimes of violence incurred physical chastisement. A taste of his own stick might give the wife-beater pause: the ruffian cares for his precious skin when he cares for nothing else. The legislation of the Southern States is superior to that of the North in that it puts rape on a par with murder. Our outlying and thinly-settled regions are often reproached for resorting to the methods of Judge Lynch; yet this custom, while obviously liable to abuse, seldom puts the noose on the wrong neck, and is vastly more sure, speedy, and impressive than the devious processes of the courts. It was openly defended in Iowa not many years ago, on the ground that the farmers were poor and did not care to run up a heavy bill against the county, and then probably have justice cheated at the last; they had caught their man, had positive proofs of his guilt, and preferred to dispense with idle formalities. In more advanced communities, twice in recent years have destructive riots been provoked by the success of pettifoggers in procuring delays and defeats of justice. The law and the methods of enforcing it once reformed, the occasion for these disorderly substitutes would cease.

The root of the trouble is in our ethical ideas, which have come to be askew and top-heavy. "The quality of mercy is not strained,"—but it often needs to be. As in divinity, "a God all mercy were a God not just," so in our morals and jurisprudence, the bottom is in danger of dropping out when compassion intrudes into the primary place of justice. Humanity and philanthropy are fine things, but like other fine things they are liable to be overdone. If our plea is reactionary, it may be urged that when we have gone too far forward, the only thing to do is to go back a little. It should be remembered that an honest man is better any day than a rogue, and he who loves his neighbor as himself is entitled to more consideration than he who is too handy with bludgeon, knife, or pistol.

A British Error.—Mr. Besant is an admirable writer, but he is unfamiliar with the intricacies of American politics. This fact is manifest from a passage in his latest novel, about two parties in a lawyer's office at a critical juncture. "Between these hovered the *wobblers or mugwumps*, who whispered that while on the one hand—on the other hand—that while they readily admitted—as they were free to confess—. Everybody knows the wobbler. He is really, if he knew it, the master of the situation; but, because he is a wobbler,

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he cannot use his strength. When he is called upon to act, he falls into two pieces, each of which begins to wobble and to fall into other two pieces."

Everybody may know the Wobbler, but Mr. Besant evidently does not know the Mugwump, who has nothing in common with the Wobbler except the superficial fact that he sometimes sides with one party and sometimes with the other. In character the two are opposites. The Mugwump is sour, sombre, censorious, and solitary. So far from being afraid to form or promulgate an opinion, he is usually ready to "deal damnation round the land" on all whom he considers foes to the common welfare, on whichever ticket their names may appear. He is apt to be his own witness, counsel, judge, and jury—and possibly his own executioner besides. The vices hitherto usually credited to him are conceit, stubbornness, unpracticality, and pharisaism. It is his boast that his sovereignty is carried under his own hat, and not in anybody else's head or pocket. He is a Protestant of the Protestants, a radical of the radicals, a reformer who is rarely satisfied with any reforms not of his own devising. As the tool of neither party, he is sincerely detested and ostentatiously despised by both,—except at election times, when (since his numbers are increasing) each squints in his direction, if peradventure he may be cajoled. He would like mightily to be master of the situation, if he could attain that end by means that suited his peculiar notions, and would not shrink from the resulting responsibility. A few sanguine stalwarts have (under special provocation or exigency) professed to think that he could be bribed or bullied; but it was reserved for a British novelist to discover that he is nothing but a *Wobbler*.

HAS the historical novel gone out of fashion? A leading Chicago firm does not think so, for it offers one in two goodly volumes,—a form and size unusual in this country. "Monk and Knight" is called a "study in fiction;" it shows considerable research on the author's part, and requires mental concentration on that of the reader. The era is the early part of the sixteenth century; the scene is scattered about Western Europe; the plan is liberal and roomy. Here one may gather, with much detail of circumstance, that the Church of those days was strongly inclined to be narrow, repressive of free intellectual activity, and indeed bigoted to the verge of persecution; that Erasmus was a scholar, a wit, and a sort of half-baked reformer, with more light than warmth, and somewhat lacking in the courage of his convictions; that the seed which Wiclif planted was not wholly dead in England; and that the Italian Waldenses were very superior persons, with the views of nineteenth-century American Protestants. The tale, which comes from Plymouth Church in Chicago, is one of "tendency," and will be found rather instructive than entertaining. It is not to be regarded as a rival of "The Schönberg-Cotta Family," for it deals with the period just preceding that in which Luther was the dominant figure, and has as much to say about the Renascence as about the Reformation.

THE portrait of Ella Wheeler Wilcox in the June magazine was made from a photograph by Rockwood, of New York. Credit was inadvertently omitted at the time.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH.

In Starry Realms. By Sir Robert S. Ball, D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.S., Lowndean Professor of Astronomy and Geometry in the University of Cambridge. With numerous Illustrations.

The inquiring mind of the young lady who wondered how they found out the names of all the stars would be infinitely enlightened by a little familiarity with Sir Robert S. Ball's admirable book. She might not discover in it the especial piece of information which fame taxes her with desiring; but there is almost nothing else in the wide range of astronomical science which she could not learn from these handsome pages and elaborate illustrations.

It has been well said that the scientific man who condescends to teach in unscientific language is a boon to his race. He is the Mercury of the learned Olympus who brings down the divine truths of that high realm to the uses and the comprehension of the lower world. That this office has, in the case of Sir Robert Ball, fallen into hands preordained for its difficult execution, every page of In Starry Realms sufficiently witnesses. He is equipped, as an eminent scholar, with the most complete knowledge of his subject from the side of pure science, and he still holds unforgotten the speech of the layman. A book made out of such material is always a desideratum in the household and the school, and the Messrs. Lippincott have done wisely in making it known to American readers, who will find the author all the more to their taste from his unstinted praise of the learning and inventiveness of American astronomers,—the Lick Observatory coming in for a whole chapter of praise by itself.

The author tells us that his "sketches of specially interesting matters relating to the different heavenly bodies may be regarded as supplementary to a treatise on elementary astronomy such as his little volume, Starland." That the present work covers in itself, however, a very extensive field may be learned from a list of the chapters, which, though always part of a general scheme, are each complete essays. Some of the titles are: The Heat of the Sun; The Constant Face of the Moon; A Visit to an Observatory; Notes on Nebulæ; Venus and Mercury; The Names of the Planets; A Falling Star; The Number of the Stars; Photographing the Stars; Darwinism and its Relation to other Branches of Science.

Human life is rendered more livable by the diffusion of scientific knowledge, and Sir Robert Ball has found out the secret of imparting great truths as if they were, as they should be, the inheritance of the humblest reader.

A Mystery of New Orleans. By Wm. H. Holcombe, M.D.

Dr. William H. Holcombe has made for himself a reputation of a unique order in American letters. He is a wide and discriminating student of the occult sciences; a thoughtful reasoner on the burning issues of the time; and a creator of fiction, whose imagination is at once vivid and constructive. Out of all these human elements this author weaves stories which give the best characteristics of each. He makes his tale the vehicle for his message in so subtle and attractive a way that rubber tires on a macadam surface could not carry the reader along more agreeably or swiftly.

The previous successes of Dr. Holcombe in the field of, so to speak, loaded fiction, have rendered a new book by him a consideration to a class of readers who like some substance with their shadow. These will doubtless hear with pleasure that the Messrs. Lippincott have just issued, in their American Novel Series, A Mystery of New Orleans from his pen, in which thought-transference, hypnotism, clairvoyance, and all the hidden usages of theosophy, are blent with the picturesque background of New Orleans into a tale of thrilling murder and long-deferred but inevitable detection.

Just after the war, disappear Gordon Clarke and his little daughter. A mystery of twenty years' growth surrounds them. A young architect of Chicago resolves, with the aid of occult science, to lift the veil. The story narrates his adventures, and his consequent love-affair, with telling effect. The Creoles introduced by Dr. Holcombe differ from Mr. Cable's in being true to the elevated types met with in their native city; and these and all the other numerous characters are infused with a vitality which renders the scene a living panorama of real Southern life. A thoughtful Symposium on the Race Problem concludes a book well packed with interest.

The Gentlewoman at Home. By Mrs. Talbot Coke.

It is a cheering sign, amid a cloud of gloomy portents, when business gives way to beauty, and utility makes room for pleasure. We Americans have long been accused by our elder brothers who live nearer the Muses with forgetting the charms of life and cleaving to the charges. There was, too, a grain of truth in the indictment which rendered it all the more galling. "The storm-cloud of the nineteenth century" lowered a trifle darker over us than over the statelier East. But we are changing all that within the present decade. We began where all vital improvement must begin, by the hearthside, and the new sense of beauty is stealing, like the warmth of the coals, into every corner of the land.

Books upon books have flowed from the press with instruction for the Angel in the House; and these are the chief missionaries of this religion of beauty. That they continue to come with increasing usefulness and knowledge is a sure test of the deep hold the subject has taken upon the national mind. The last of them is The Gentlewoman at Home, which the Lippincotts bring out in an attractive garb, and which is the work of Mrs. Talbot Coke, a lady whose wide knowledge of the world, whose travel, and, above all, whose innate taste and keen sense of color, render her a recognized authority, both in England and here, upon the subject of home-making. Her book bears the legend, "Under the patronage of H. M. the Queen and H. R. H. the Princess of Wales," and in all respects it fulfils the high standard set by such recognition. It is written in a light and charming vein almost conversational, but the talk is that of a brilliant woman of society, who at the same time reveres the household gods and knows thoroughly how to deck their altars with the choicest harmonies of tint and the most gracious forms. Mrs. Coke's love of flowers is also a happy trait, which enables her to add to the charm of her suggested interiors a touch beyond that given by even the richest tapestry or most delicate Sèvres. "I dare say," she tells us with engaging candor, "I shall be accused of carrying my mania for harmonious coloring to excess when I confess that I consider, in papering rooms in mine own house, what kind of background the result will be for my flowers."

It is from such unaffected sentences as this that we learn what a frank and penetrating mind we are introduced to in The Gentlewoman at Home, and such good company will be found not only entertaining for a short chat, but most helpful as an unfailing guide to the House beautiful.

A Daughter's Heart. By Mrs. H. Lovett Cameron.

All of us have known the homely and shy daughter of a brilliant family, she who runs the errands of the others, who entertains the unwelcome guests, but who is, strangely enough, the hidden idol of the servants and, perhaps, a big brother's pet. She is a type that touches the heart and purifies the mind. She is unalloyed nature, what there is of her, because she is unconscious of art. As the blind are rendered sensitive to sound by the absence of light, so this Cinderella of the drawing-room has learned to be true and good through the absence of self.

The reviewer is tempted to dally with so attractive a character, and to forget a little that it is so much better portrayed than he can hope to present it, in Mrs. H. Lovett Cameron's captivating story, A Daughter's Heart, which the Lippincotts have just issued in their Select Series. Here, the unbeautiful daughter of a large county family is little Susan, just back from boarding-school, when the new and lordly lover of her stately sister Adelaide has come for his first visit to Raybourne, the seat of the Meyricks. The Meyricks are highly connected but not abundantly wealthy, and it is the mother's dearest wish to marry her eldest daughter Adelaide to a man of wealth and station. Sir Jasper Keith fulfils this description, and he has recently obeyed the behest of family convenience, rather than of love, and laid his name and fortune at Adelaide's feet. But he finds himself strangely drawn toward Susan's unattractive face, and his pity for her nourishes a love which, in its growth, its episodes, and its outcome, is the really charming theme of Mrs. Cameron's book.

One might swing in a hammock day long in such company and forget even the warmest of suns in the breeziness of her narrative.

Questions of Faith and Duty. By the Right Rev. Anthony W. Thorold, D.D., Lord Bishop of Winchester.

"The two constituents of a satisfied life are much tranquillity and some excitement." Bishop Thorold has placed this pregnant sentence from John Stuart Mill at the beginning of his devout book as if by it to invite the reader into a place full of musing quietude and secluded thought upon the verities of life. One step across the threshold takes us into this contemplative atmosphere and engages our reverent attention by sentiments of religious fervor simply spoken from the heart rather than the head. To elevate and purify by the inculcation of old religious truths expressed without the rancor of controversy or the heat of proselytism is the worthy aim of this eminent English churchman. He tells us in feeling words that his "simple pages, covering, though not indeed exhausting, some of the most vital questions of Christian thought and conduct, were mostly composed during the enforced leisure of Sundays, when to write the Gospel seemed the next best thing to preaching it." He further expresses the hope that "'the God of all comfort' will enable him to comfort some who are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith he himself has been comforted of God."

In these days of shifting dogma it is a serene pleasure to fall in, upon the highway of religious thought, with such a guide as Bishop Thorold. He has a steadfast faith in the old order, which casts its clear light upon the reader

and vindicates anew the ways of God, as interpreted by the mother church, to man. No one, be he orthodox or agnostic, can, however, turn the pages of these Questions of Faith and Duty, without gleaning from them saving truths and consolatory reflections which must, as Bishop Thorold hopes, edify even a saint.

The workmanship of the book, which comes from the Lippincott press, is in fitting harmony with its chaste and dignified contents. All in all, it is of an inward tone and an outward size to make it a most acceptable daily companion.

Handley Cross; or, Mr. Jorrocks's Hunt; and Mr. Facey Romford's Hounds. Jorrocks Edition.

"*Hoop! Hoop! Hoop!* There she goes! What a panic ensues! Puss lays her long ears upon her back and starts for the hill with the fleetness of the wind. The pack, with more noise than speed, strain every nerve, and the farther they go the farther they are left behind. The hare crosses over the summit of the hill, and the hounds are reduced to their noises for the line. Now, Mountain! Now, Tipler! Now, Bonnets-o'-Blue! Ah, what dogs they are!" Thus, with a Tally-ho, opens the chase forever preserved in all its genuine heartiness in the pages of these always young old books. Noise, fun, snap of whip, splash of hapless rider, echo through the copses and away over-hill, and then the horn with a long Tar-an-ta-ra,—this is the kind of lusty fun loved by the roast-beef-eating grandparents of Our Old Home, and this is the burden of the happy-go-lucky series now re-issued by the Lippincotts under the appropriate title Jorrocks Edition.

Mr. Jorrocks, let it be said, was the creation of a writer who in many respects was unique. His humor was broad and rich, his knowledge of the sport which served him for the material of his fiction was thorough and true, and his ability as a writer was unquestioned. With these attributes, Mr. Surtees threw himself enthusiastically into his books and gave them a contagious charm which is perennial.

Here, then, is an armful of his sporting narratives comprised in two handsome volumes, entitled, respectively, Handley Cross; or, Mr. Jorrocks's Hunt; and Mr. Facey Romford's Hounds. These are not novels in the strict sense, but rambling tales such as were wont to be read in other days, and such as become better reading as time goes by and the bellow of the hounds recedes farther into the past. At present, when newer red-coats and other hounds begin to be heard across-country in our own land, these pictures of the chase will have the added interest of instruction and lead to many a talk around the table when the hunters gather under the lamp and the day is over. The volumes are abundantly illustrated by John Leech, of *Punch*, whose love of the chase was as hearty as Mr. Surtees's, and whose pencil was as vivid and as funny as the author's pen.

CURRENT NOTES.

As a matter of useful information it may be stated that whenever a cooking receipt calls for a baking powder the "Royal" should be used. The receipt will be found to work better and surer, and the bread, biscuit, rolls, cakes, dumplings, crusts, puddings, crullers, or whatever made, will be produced sweeter, lighter, finer-flavored, more dainty, palatable, and wholesome. Besides, the "Royal" will go further or has greater leavening power, and is therefore more economical than any other powder.

Many receipts as published still call for cream of tartar and soda, the old-fashioned way of raising. Modern cooking and expert cooks do not sanction this old way. In all such receipts the Royal Baking Powder should be substituted without fail.

The greatest adepts in the culinary art are particular to use the Royal only, and the authors of the most popular cook-books and the teachers of the successful cooking schools, with whom the best results are imperative, are careful to impress their readers and pupils with the importance of its exclusive employment.

The Royal Baking Powder is the greatest help of modern times to perfect cooking,-and every receipt requiring a quick-raising ingredient should embody it.

CHANGE OF DIET.—An article in the *Cornhill Magazine*, by Grant Allen, describing the habits of the parrot tribe, gives an account of the transformation of a member of that family, the New Zealand kea, from the vegetarian diet natural to these birds to one of flesh. Prior to the settlement of Europeans in the country, the kea was content with the diet of its tribe,—honey, fruit, seeds, and the like; but upon the introduction of sheep, and the killing of them for food, the kea was moved to imitate the dietary habits of man, as well as his voice, and began eating the offal from the slaughter-pens. The taste for flesh so grew upon him that he became a veritable bird of prey, and attacked the living sheep, alighting upon their backs and tearing open the flesh to get at the kidneys, of which he is very fond. Having secured these choice morsels, he leaves his victims to a miserable death. Hundreds of sheep have been killed in this way. The statement seems almost incredible, and, if true, is one of the most singular instances of the transformation of animal nature on record.

DUPLICATE WHIST.—The new way of playing whist called "Duplicate Whist" has become very popular with the lovers of this, the best and grandest game that can be played with cards, both in the New England States and the far West. It has, however, not been played in this section to any extent: perhaps only one or two clubs in Western Pennsylvania have tried it. The way it is played is as follows. A set of boards or trays, numbering from eight to twenty-four, according to the number of hands that are to be played, with separate packs of cards for each tray, and thirteen markers, are procured; and the game then begins. No. 1 board is first used, the cards shuffled, the trump for the whole evening being selected in any manner wished, but the trump must remain the same until all the boards have been played on twice. The boards are placed on the table, the top facing the same set of players the first round, and on the second round they are turned toward the other set of players. A hand with an extended forefinger is printed on the centre of each board, and it points out which player is to lead. The cards are then played, each player laying his cards down right in front of himself, and as each trick is played it is seen which side has won that, and one of the markers is placed to his side. When the hand is played, each side counts how many marks they have, which shows how many tricks they have won; this is entered on a score card; each player then shuffles the hand he has just played, and, keeping it by itself, he puts it under a rubber band on the tray. The tray is then laid aside, another taken up and played, and so on until all the eight or twenty-four have been played and the score counted; then the boards are taken up again in irregular order, and, as above, the hands are reversed, each set of players playing the hands that the other set had played. As each pair of players get the same cards that the other pair did during the progress of the evening, the pair that plays them the best is the one that will come out ahead in points. Mr. C. M. Paine wrote an elegant and exhaustive article on this way of playing the game, which was published in the Milwaukee *Sentinel*, and among other things he says,—

"Duplicate whist differs from regular whist only in minor details. The maxims of the standard game are not interfered with at all. The predominant feature of duplicate whist consists of playing through a series of hands and then shifting the cards so that in the end each side of opponents has held equal strength. Luck in holding cards thus being distributed exactly even, any difference in the score is a measure of superior skill to the victors. There can be no pleading of poor hands as the cause of defeat. The game admits of many fine comparisons which are wholly absent in regular whist. Players are stimulated to do their utmost, as there is no escape from a poor record. The game is certain to become popular, because merit is bestowed on the deserving, and those that have not earned the reward are confronted by facts,—the gentlest and at the same time the most convincing of all arguments."

A small club of whist-players in this city have been trying the game for the last month, and they are very much pleased with it. As there are no trays or system for playing this game for sale in this city, the club, in looking around for the best and most perfect system, found that the "Kalamazoo Method," which is patented and manufactured by the extensive firm of Ihling Bros. & Everard, of Kalamazoo, Mich., was really the finest and most complete method, and that their apparatus was the best made and the cheapest that could be procured. This firm will send complete rules for playing the game on application by mail, and will also supply individuals and clubs with all the necessary appliances.—*Pittsburg Leader.*

VACATION

Should be a season of health-building and recreation. Nor is there any need of allowing the system to "run down" before-hand. All whose minds, muscles, or nerves are severely taxed by the nature of their occupation, and who are usually worn out when vacation-time arrives, would do well to make use of **AYER'S** Sarsaparilla, both before and during their period of rest. It wonderfully sustains the vital powers, quickens the appetite, invigorates the blood, strengthens the nerves, and greatly facilitates the restoration of health—making the Summer outing a season of more than temporary enjoyment. Be sure you get

AYER'S Sarsaparilla

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EXCURSIONISTS

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Ayer's Cathartic Pills

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Every Dose Effective

VENTILATION.—The healthy atmosphere in a room is one in which the air is changed to the extent of three thousand cubic feet per hour per adult inmate. The air admitted need not be cold; warmed air, so long as it is fresh, is of course preferable to cold air in winter, but in some way the air must be brought in if we are to continue in health. There are various ways of doing this. One is by admitting cold air so that it is directed upward toward the ceiling, where the air of a room is at the highest temperature; the cold stream is then heated in its passage as it falls to the lower level for breathing. But in large rooms, to utilize at its best this current, there should be in the skirting outlets communicating with a heated up-cast flue, which will draw away the heavy air near the door. In cases where there is heating by hot-water coils, the cold air may be brought in at or near the floor level and passed through the hot-water coils—the outlet for vitiated air being in or near the ceiling—to a heated up-cast flue. In larger rooms or buildings for public assemblies it may be necessary with either of these systems to use a fan, either to propel fresh air into the room or to draw away the vitiated air.

The great desideratum in the admission of fresh air is to cut it up into very fine streams, something in the way water is cut up in passing through the fine rose of a watering-can. It has been found that air admitted through a tube or orifice of equal sectional area throughout enters as a cold draught; but if the inlet be through a series of small truncated cones the smaller section outward, the larger inward, with a wire gauze on the inside, the current is so cut up and diffused that the draught is not felt. By analogy, a mass of water entering through a narrow canal drives all before it and cuts a channel for itself, but the same quantity passing over a large surface of ground gently irrigates it. Another important point is not to let the passage of the air be at too great a velocity; the gentler the flow the better.—*The Contemporary Review.*

HAFIZ.—About two miles northwest of Shiraz, in a garden the Persian name of which signifies "the place of prayer," lies, beneath the shadow of cypress-trees, one of which he is said to have planted with his own hand, Shems-Eddin Mohammed, surnamed Hafiz, or "the steadfast in scripture." Poet, recluse, and mystic, his songs, now some five hundred years old, have been sung from the banks of the Ganges to the Danube, and from Cairo to Samarcand; neither are they silent yet on the lips of the camel-drivers in the desert or of pilgrims to Kufa. No other Persian has equalled him in fame; not Sadi, whose monument, now in ruins, may be visited near his own; nor Firdusi, the author, in sixty thousand couplets, of the "Book of Kings;" nor Jami, who has associated himself forever with the lyric loves of Yussuf and Zuleika.

The immense blaze of light, the concentrated speech, the direct and steady vision of things high and low, which entitle Hafiz to a seat among the sovereign poets, are altogether his own. Every critic has likened him to Anacreon; but, while there may be resemblance, comparison is quite beside the mark. In the West his qualities have been scattered among a dozen men of genius, and Voltaire, had he combined the highest poetic inspiration with a meditative vein, might perhaps have given to the world a "Divan" in French. But Hafiz stands alone in the splendor of his gayety, as in the union of religious enthusiasm with a more than Aristophanic burlesquing of things held sacred by his age and nation.—*The Quarterly Review.*

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for Infants and Children.

"Castoria is so well adapted to children that I recommend it as superior to any prescription known to me." H. A. ARCHER, M. D.,
111 So. Oxford St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

"The use of 'Castoria' is so universal and its merits so well known that it seems a work of supererogation to endorse it. Few are the intelligent families who do not keep Castoria within easy reach."
CARLOS MARTYN, D. D.,
New York City.
Late Pastor Bloomingdale Reformed Church.

Castoria cures Colic, Constipation, Sour Stomach, Diarrhœa, Eructation, Kills Worms, gives sleep, and promotes digestion,
Without injurious medication.

"For several years I have recommended your 'Castoria,' and shall always continue to do so as it has invariably produced beneficial results."
EDWIN F. PARDEE, M. D.,
"The Winthrop," 125th Street and 7th Ave.,
New York City.

THE CENTAUR COMPANY, 77 MURRAY STREET, NEW YORK.

THE PENN MUTUAL LIFE knows little about advertising,—business comes, bills are paid; whether or not a particular advertisement compels to action,—who can tell? There are high-priests in every temple. Just now the skilled writer of advertisements imagines a special potency in the spells he weaves.

THE PENN MUTUAL LIFE knows something about life insurance; has been at it successfully through forty-five years; leads and shares in progressive excellences; all the time has made it safe, cheap, just, and liberal, where liberality was not injustice. The ideal company exists where the insured themselves are bound by identity and community of interest,—where each is for all and all for each all the time, and where there is a due understanding of principles, methods, and responsibilities. There and then life insurance will be safe and cheap,—safe beyond peradventure, cheap because fully worth all its cost.

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HOME OFFICES: 921-3-5 CHESTNUT ST.,
PHILADELPHIA.

IF a style unique, virile, and poetic be all a magazine editor, critic, or reader craves, Ambrose Bierce can be pointed to more surely, and with more reason, than many writers now upheld to public notice. Glancing at fiction of the present day, little variety in narrative, dialogue, or character is met with. Whether the minds of imaginative writers necessarily work on the same lines, or whether plagiarism be unconscious, would be hard to decide; nevertheless, stories appear from day to day, from week to week, that are in most respects such fac-similes of one another that one is led to imagine that the whole story-telling fraternity had clustered about one or another while in the agonies of composition. But now we come to a writer that spins out the product of his own fertile brain, drawing in and out the threads of mysticism, emotion, and originality, until we know him at once as a genius at the loom. In some respects, his stories resemble those of Robert Louis Stevenson, having a suggestion of weirdness and rich coloring; but, beyond this, Mr. Bierce has a style exclusively his own. "Then why is he not more widely known," might well be asked, "since merit is the one stand-point?" But when some of the short stories in the various magazines are looked over, the reason becomes obvious. One sees the inevitable dialect, the moss-grown love-making, and the hysterical heroine nursing her woe, while tales tasting of the occult, the weird, and the strongly imaginative are declined with thanks, and the writer is, as far as possible, suppressed. But Mr. Bierce, by sheer force of merit, is forcing recognition, and his recent book, "Tales of Soldiers and Civilians," has been widely noticed. The comments are for the most part favorable, and the book deserves them. Each story in the collection bears the stamp of the author's versatility, virility, and artistic nature. Some of these tales are as gruesome as Poe's, and make one's flesh creep with their over-elaborated horrors. Others hold characters as accurately and sympathetically drawn as Dickens's or Bret Harte's, while in those relating to warfare and bloodshed the narrations are thrilling, vivid, and tragic. California may justly be proud of her son, whose latest work is noteworthy, and for whom the future holds even larger possibilities.—*Current Literature.*

THE well-known adage that "history repeats itself" was forcibly illustrated in the course of some recent historical studies in two somewhat curious examples. Apropos of the prevalent "grip," or "La Grippe Russienne," in the year 1647 the American colonies were visited by that annoying as well as dangerous epidemic. Director-General Stuyvesant of New Netherland was "down" with it. He was unable to attend the meeting of the first popular Assembly—the "Nine Men"—which he had been forced to grant, and so perhaps he did not much regret the detention. Dr. O'Callaghan in commenting on his sickness says, "A species of influenza passed over the whole continent, attacking Indians, English, French, and Dutch indiscriminately." Winthrop speaks of it as follows: "It began with a cold, and in many was accompanied with a light fever. Such as bled or used cooling drinks generally died; such as made use of cordials and more strengthening, comfortable things recovered." Stuyvesant recovered. But in Connecticut this early "grip" had a distinguished victim, no less a man, indeed, than the Rev. Thomas Hooker. It is more than likely that the Dutch governor took "the strengthening things" without stint: possibly Hooker did not seek these as a remedy.—*The National Magazine.*

Clean your Straw Hat with Pearline.

Directions.

First brush out all the dirt possible. Then, with a sponge, wash the hat with the ordinary Pearline solution (in the proportion of a tablespoonful to a pail of water.) Steam it well over the nozzle of a kettle; rinse well with sponge and warm water; press into shape, and dry.

You can do all this at home at a cost of less than one penny. It's simple enough, if you have **Pearline**—but, with **Pearline**, every kind of washing and cleaning is simple.

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Beware Peddlers and some unscrupulous grocers will tell you "this is as good as" or "the same as Pearline." IT'S FALSE—Pearline is never peddled; if your grocer sends you an imitation, do the honest thing—*send it back.* 381 JAMES PYLE, New York.

WHAT DO YOU FEED THE BABY?

THE TEXAS QUADRUPLETS.

INGERSOLL, Texas.

Messrs. REED & CARNRICK:

GENTLEMEN—By the way of introduction, I am the happy father of a quartette of girls, born January 10th, 1890. Soon after their birth I worried along as well as I could with wet-nurses, but being unable to get anything constant, I resolved to try artificial food. I tried several foods, and whether owing to my failure to comply with their intricate method of preparation, or whether the foods were not suited to our particular babies, I can't say. However, they disagreed with them, whereupon we tried **CARNRICK'S FOCD** with the best results. They are all doing finely. Can you furnish me with a case of Food at wholesale price?

Yours truly, E. T. PAGE.

Lacto=Preparata

An ALL-MILK FOOD for the first Eight Months.

Carnrick's Food

For the remainder of the nursing period.

THE above two foods are the only prepared Infant Foods worthy of the name, and the only ones that will perfectly nourish an infant. Send for free samples and sixty-four page pamphlet, entitled "Our Baby's First and Second Years," by Marion Harland, with advice by an eminent physician on care and feeding of infants.

REED & CARNRICK,

NEW YORK.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF KATHLEEN MAVOURNEEN.—"One of my happiest hours in Bohemia," writes the poet Robert Rexdale for the *Boston Herald*, "I recall a meeting with the venerable composer of 'Kathleen Mavourneen.' It was at a gathering of musical and literary people in the old seaport city of Portland.

"The occasion, I remember, was in honor of the eightieth birthday of Prof. F. Nicholls Crouch, who had journeyed from his Southern home, 'green-walled by the hills of Maryland,' to celebrate this auspicious event with friends of lang syne. It was made all the more memorable, too, because of the presence among the guests of the poetess Caroline Dana Howe, who wrote 'Leaf by Leaf the Roses Fall.'

"Possibly there are many who have not heard that Portland was once the home of both these brilliant song-writers, and to those ignorant of the period concerning which I write, let me say those were rare old days in Maine's chief city when Crouch first knew it, anterior to prohibitive legislation and its brood of ill-conditioned things. Here in the stranger's land, upon his arrival from England, the composer found a welcome broad and deep among the ruling spirits of the time. It is certain he owed much of that welcome to his beautiful song, full of the heart-break, the sweet, weird music of an ancient race, haunting the ear like the cry of the banshee in the stillness of an Irish night.

"Old friends of Crouch have given me a pen-picture of his splendid manhood at that time; and at eighty, even, when I met him in a delightful corner of Bohemia, he retained in a wonderful degree the impress of a strong personality, while his lustrous dark eyes, that Cassius-like seemed to look quite through the deeds of men, had not lost their power of fascination. He impressed one as being at least twenty years younger, was keen of intellect, loved a well-turned witticism, and his manner had all the courtliness of the old school.

KATHLEEN MAVOURNEEN.

Kathleen Mavourneen! The song is still ringing
As fresh and as clear as the trill of the birds;
In world-weary hearts it is sobbing and singing
In pathos too sweet for the tenderest words.
Oh, have we forgotten the one who first breathed it,
Oh, have we forgotten his rapturous art,
Our meed to the master whose genius bequeathed it?
Oh, why art thou silent, thou voice of the heart!

Kathleen Mavourneen! Thy lover still lingers;
The long night is waning, the stars pale and few;
Thy sad serenader, with tremulous fingers,
Is bowed with his tears as the lily with dew:
The old harp-strings quaver, the old voice is shaking,
In sighs and in sobs moans the yearning refrain.
The old vision dims, and the old heart is breaking,—
Kathleen Mavourneen, inspire us again.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

HENRI ROCHEFORT is an extremely excitable writer. He begins his work always in a very correct costume. Then, as he proceeds, he will first tear off his coat, next his waistcoat, and then his collar and cravat. It is fortunate if he does not ruin his shirt-front by pulling it open, regardless of button-holes and studs.

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LAMENESS
SORE FEET
INFLAMED EYES, CHAFED OR ROUGHENED SKIN
WOUNDS
BRUISES
POND'S
SPRAINS
CATARRH
DIARRHŒA, NEURALGIA, RHEUMATISM
PILES
BURNS
EXTRACT
BITES
SCALDS
FEMALE COMPLAINTS, CUTS, INSECT STINGS
HEMORRHAGES
OF ALL KINDS
FOR
INFLAMMATIONS
OF ALL KINDS

ASTHMA AND HAY-FEVER.—There is no "sure cure for every case of asthma" or "every case of hay-fever," but the worst cases, if uncomplicated by organic disease, can be *cured to stay cured* by constitutional treatment, and this at the patient's home. We treat no one without a thorough knowledge of the case. *Incurable cases declined.* Examination free by mail. We want name and address of every sufferer from asthma or hay-fever. P. Harold Hayes, M.D., Buffalo, New York.

DRESS WELL AT LOW COST. HOW? By dealing with the manufacturer, thus paying but one profit on the material. The Delaware Woollen Mills make Men's Suits to order from their own all-wool cloths, at prices lower than you pay for ready-made clothes. No made-up stock kept. Every garment made to order from measure. Perfect fit guaranteed. Every variety of goods. Pants to order, $3.00 to $10.00. Suits to order, $12.00 to $35.00. Samples, self-measuring rules, and a tape measure sent free. DELAWARE WOOLLEN MILLS Co., Office, No. 10 North Fourth Street, Philadelphia, Pa. Established 1825.

IN the Ireland of Carlton and Banim, the able-bodied tramp, as we know him, scarcely existed. Wayfaring men were of a far gentler type. There were sturdy beggars, as much the pensioners of the farm-houses as were pre-Reformation beggars of the monasteries in England. There were pedlers with packs stuffed not only with gay prints and ribbons, combs and stationery, shoe-laces and spools, but also with ballad-literature which was learned by heart and passed along. There was an occasional "poor scholar" questing for help to study for the priesthood; likewise the hedge-schoolmaster was a peripatetic, travelling from one house to another, royally entertained and listened to as an oracle, because of his learning. Alack! the white workhouse walls gathered them all in—all the "jolly beggars" and harmless wayfarers who entered a house with the lovely greeting "God save all here!" or passed a fellow-wayfarer with "God save you kindly!"—a greeting in vogue when I was a child, not a score of years ago.

In remote country places the little old inns still survive. Round fires of peat, amid brown walls and rafters, laboring men still meet to "cosher," or gossip, when they are off work; the turf-smoke, sharp and penetrating, warms them, and sails off to the low skies, bluer than any smoke ever was before or since. The good woman of the house will come and listen, with arms akimbo, be the discussion on pigs or politics, and will have her say thereon; while her juvenile handmaiden, shoeless and short-petticoated, serves the customers with their brimming porter. In such a hostlery there is none of the arranged hilarity of an English village tap—no clubs of friendly brothers, for your Irish certainly do not band themselves—but one will drop in and another, and there will be grave discussion; and perhaps the younger men, if there be a good whistler, may start a solemn-faced and graceful jig, heads up, hands in pocket, pipe between teeth. Story-telling? Oh, no! I fear all our stories and songs are dead in the workhouses.—*Katharine Tynan, in the Magazine of Art.*

WHAT THE EARTHQUAKE DID.—A correspondent of the *London Times*, writing from Tokio, gives these revised statistics of the earthquake last October in Japan: "The number of people killed and burned to death is now found to have been about ten thousand instead of eight thousand, and the number of the injured to have been fifteen thousand instead of ten thousand. The area of the severely shaken district—taking as its measure that in which brick buildings suffered—is estimated by Prof. Milne at four thousand four hundred square miles. The same authority adds that the disturbance distinctly shook about ninety-two thousand square miles of Japan's territory; that tremors were noticed at Shanghai; and that, if Japan had been surrounded by *terra firma* instead of water, the land area directly agitated would have been as much as four hundred thousand square miles."

GUILDS.—The origin of guilds is "lost in the mists of antiquity." Trading guilds flourished in Phœnicia and Greece, and the Roman Collegia and Sodalicia were religious, social, or funeral guilds. The guild is found in Anglo-Saxon England, but rather as a fraternity for feasting, preserving courtesy and order, seeing to the performance of funeral rites of deceased members, and so on. It was when the first brunt of the Norman conquest had spent its force that the Craft Guild—the association of a particular trade—and the Merchant Guild—the federation of all trades—began to rise into importance.

QUINA-LAROCHE

LAROCHE'S INVIGORATING TONIC.

GRAND NATIONAL PRIZE OF 16,600 FRANCS.

CONTAINING

Peruvian Bark, Iron

AND

Pure Catalan Wine.

An experience of 25 years in experimental analysis, together with the valuable aid extended by the Academy of Medicine in Paris, has enabled M. Laroche to extract the entire active properties of Peruvian Bark(a result not before attained), and to concentrate them in an elixir, which possessed in the highest degree its restorative and invigorating qualities, free from the disagreeable bitterness of ordinary preparations.

This invigorating tonic is powerful in its effect, is easily administered, assimilates thoroughly and quickly with the gastric juices, without deranging the action of the stomach.

Iron and Cinchona are the most powerful weapons employed in the art of curing; Iron is the principle of our blood, and forms its force and richness. Cinchona affords life to the organs and activity to their functions.

Endorsed by the Medical Faculty of Paris, and used with entire success for the cure of

MALARIA,
INDIGESTION,
FEVER and AGUE.
NEURALGIA,
LOSS of APPETITE,
POORNESS of BLOOD,
WASTING DISEASES,
and
RETARDED
CONVALESCENCE.

E. FOUGERA & CO., Agents, No. 30 North William street, New York. 22 rue Drouot, Paris.

Do you not wish to save money, clothes, time, labor, fuel, and health, if possible? All these can be saved by the use of Dobbins' Electric Soap. Try it once. We say this, knowing that if you try it once, you will always use it. Is it economy to save one, two, or three cents on the price of a bar of soap, and lose five dollars or more in ruined, tender, rotted clothing spoiled by the strong soda in the poor soap? Washing-powders, concentrated lye, and cheap soaps are low-priced, to be sure, but they are terribly expensive, taking ruined clothing into account.

Remember, Dobbins' Electric Soap preserves clothes washed with it; bleaches white ones, brightens colored ones; softens flannels and blankets, and contains nothing to injure the most delicate fabric. Ask your grocer for it. Take nothing else in its place. Read carefully all that is said on the two wrappers, and see that our name is on each.

I. L. CRAGIN & Co.,
Philadelphia, Pa.

IT is curious to think that it is not always the fruit of a plant which is eaten. The fruit of a plant is that which holds the seed. A bean-pod is the fruit of a bean plant, and when the fruit is ripe it splits open, and inside are the seeds, ripe and succulent. So it is with the pea plant, the seeds only are edible, but the pod is the fruit. Coffee, again, is a seed, and so are all the grains. Often the root alone is used,—onions, beets, carrots, and many others. With spinach it is the plant itself, and with tea the tender leaves. Just here is a very strange thing in the vegetable world. From the leaves of the same small plant, often scarce a foot and a half tall, many kinds of tea may be gathered. Most rare and valuable, the two tiny leaves on the tip end of each stalk are carefully removed, dried and cured, to be sold only in the Chinese Empire, and there to the elect of the land. Then two by two the leaves are gathered as they point delicately out in pairs from either side of the parent stalk. The finest, rarest, and most expensive teas are made from the youngest leaves, small, tender, and pale green in color; and so, two by two, the plant is stripped of its foliage, and as the leaves grow darker, larger, and tougher, so the tea is stronger, more rank, and cheaper. Thus from one small tea plant all varieties of kind and cost may be gathered.

WORLD'S FAIR.—A plan has been elaborated for making the Tyrolese section perhaps the most entertaining part of Austria's exhibit at the World's Fair. The purpose in arranging this section will be to give as graphic a representation of Tyrolese life and scenery as possible for a background to the exhibits of Tyrolese manufacturers. The section will be circular, and the walls will be covered with a panoramic picture of the Rhætian and Tyrolese Alps, including the Gross-Glockner and Ortler peaks and the largest ice-fields. In two cottages at the foot of the mountains two parties of Tyrolese will show their skill in spinning and weaving silk and in carving. Three women will make lace before the cottage doors. A company of young men and women singers will give several concerts daily. The picturesque part of the exhibit will be under the auspices of the hotel- and tavern-keepers of the Tyrol, and the representations of Tyrolese scenery will be made for the purpose of inducing American tourists in Europe to pass more of their time in the Rhætian and Tyrolese Alps.

"THE OLD OAKEN BUCKET."—"When Samuel Woodworth [born in Scituate, Plymouth County, Massachusetts, January 13, 1785] was a journeyman printer in an office on the corner of Chatham and Chambers Streets, in New York, there was a saloon near by in Frankfort Street, kept by a man named Mallory, where Woodworth and several particular friends used to resort. One afternoon the liquor was unusually excellent, and Woodworth seemed inspired by it. After taking a draught he set his glass on the table and, smacking his lips, declared that Mallory's eau de vie was superior to anything he had ever tasted. 'No,' said Mallory, 'you are mistaken; there was one thing which in both our estimations surpassed this in the way of drinking.' 'What was that?' asked Woodworth, dubiously. 'The draught of pure spring water that we used to drink from the old oaken bucket that hung in the well, after our return from the field on a hot day in summer.' A tear-drop glistened for a moment in Woodworth's eye. 'True, true!' he replied, and shortly afterward quitted the place. He immediately returned to the office, took a pen, and in half an hour 'The Old Oaken Bucket' was ready in manuscript to be embalmed in the memories of succeeding generations."—*New England Magazine.*

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Mellin's Food Twins

EVERETT H. AND RALPH W. SWETT, PROVIDENCE, R. I.

Give the Baby Mellin's Food

if you wish your infant to be well nourished, healthy, bright and active, and grow up happy, robust and vigorous.

OUR BOOK FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF MOTHERS,

"The Care and Feeding of Infants,"

will be mailed free to any address on request.

THE DOLIBER-GOODALE CO., Boston, Mass.

EUGENE FIELD'S home is peculiarly characteristic of the man. No man loves odd and curious things more than he, and no home is so packed with them as his is. Curios are on every hand, and books abound everywhere. Unconventionality reigns supreme, says Yenowine's *News*, and it must be a strange individuality who would not feel at ease around Eugene Field's board. His family is a most interesting one. His wife ornaments his home by her sweet and simple personality as much as she fills it with her domestic tendencies. The eldest daughter, Mary French Field, to whom her father so deftly inscribes one of his books, is growing up into an attractive girl of delightful manners and earnest individuality. She is fifteen now, and is known by the nickname of "Trottie." Eugene Field is the oldest living boy, now twelve, and is known as "Pinny," because he was born at the height of the "Pinafore" craze. Frederick is the youngest and is called "Daisy." He is ten. The family makes a quaint group, each member as full of individuality as the other. "I spoil them," says the father; "and the mother takes up the job where I leave off." The Field home is rarely without visitors.

WORLD'S FAIR.—The exhibits from Australia, and more especially from New South Wales, at the Columbian Exhibition promise to be of an exceedingly extensive and diversified character. Among the minerals will be an immense mass of quartz recently discovered in one of the gold-producing districts, beautiful in configuration and containing an unusually large proportion of the precious metal. The New South Wales government has granted two hundred and fifty thousand dollars toward the expenses of shipment, and the premier of Victoria has recently promised to meet three-fourths of the expenses to be incurred by that colony. It is also suggested that a deputation composed of three gentlemen from each colony, including New Zealand, fully qualified for the work of commissioners, will be deputed to attend the exhibition.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF NAPOLEON I.—Captain Maitland gives the following description of the personal appearance of Napoleon I. as he appeared in 1815. "He was then a remarkably strong, well-built man, about five feet seven inches high, his limbs particularly well formed, with a fine ankle and a very small foot, of which latter he seemed very vain, always appearing on the ship in silk stockings and shoes. His hands were also small, and had the plumpness of a woman's rather than the robustness of a man's. His eyes were light gray, his teeth good; and when he smiled, the expression of his countenance was highly pleasing; when under the influence of disappointment, however, it assumed a dark and gloomy cast. His hair was very dark brown, nearly approaching to black, and, though a little thin on the top and front, had not a gray hair amongst it. His complexion was a very uncommon one, being of a light sallow color, different from any other I ever met with. From his being corpulent he had lost much of his activity."

BEEHIVES.—It appears that the largest natural beehive in the world is the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, which has been taken possession of by myriads of bees. The greatest bee-master is Mr. Harbison, of California, who owns 6000 hives. In Greece there are 30,000 hives, in Denmark 90,000, in Russia 110,000, in Belgium 200,000, in Holland 240,000, in France 950,000, in Germany 1,450,000, in Austria 1,550,000, and in the United States 2,800,000 hives. It is calculated that a bee sucks 218,750 flowers for every ounce of honey.

NOTE.—This letter has a date.

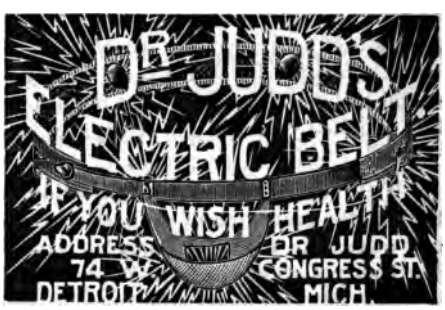
A "Personal" from Marion Harland.

February 13th, 1892.

"In spite of my protest the Royal Baking Powder Co. continues to use a recommendation of Royal Baking Powder given by me several years ago."

"Since then my views and practice with regard to the powder manufactured by this Company have undergone a radical change. I give decided preference to a pure cream-of-tartar-and-soda mixture. For this reason Cleveland's Baking Powder is in steady use in my kitchen."

Marion Harland



THE greatest offer ever made by a reliable house.

Dr. Judd's Electric Belts and Trusses on *six months' trial.* Far superior to any Galvanic or Box Battery made. The greatest Electrical Medical discovery of the nineteenth century.

For male and female.

If you wish Health, address Dr. C. B. JUDD, 74 West Congress Street, Detroit, Michigan.

6 MO'S TRIAL

Testimony.—Within the last eighteen months we have taken in something over one thousand dollars for Judd's Electric Belts and Trusses, and thus far have never had a complaint from a customer, but have had many compliments passed upon them. D. M. NEWBRO DRUG CO.

BUTTE CITY, MONT., Jan. 16, 1892.

INDIA is not usually regarded as the land of rapid progress, and Englishmen have commonly been content to follow the lead of Americans in the useful arts; but now a Calcutta lawyer, in the true Yankee spirit, brings out a pamphlet on "inventions likely to 'take' and 'pay' in India and the East." The fields in which he thinks there is room for wealth-conferring and wealth-commanding improvements include Indigo, Cotton, Silk, Grain and Rice, Wood-working and Mining Machinery, Engineering, Telephones, Water-Storage, Ploughs and other Farming Implements, Insecticides, Dairy Utensils, Sugar-Cane-Crushing Mills, Extraction of Oil from Seeds, Fruit-, Fish-, and Food-preserving Processes, Utilization of Waste and Residual Products, Domestic Requirements, Electricity, Utilization of Winds, Gas, Railway Appliances, Motive Power, Military Purposes, Aërostatics, Costume, Buildings, Pavement Materials, Shop-Front-Fittings, Wheeled Vehicles, Marine and Medical Matters. Here is a wide range of demands for Yankee notions; American inventors will please make a note of the fact. The author is Mr. Henry H. Remfry, Solicitor and Patent Agent, 5 Fancy Lane, Calcutta.

SENTIMENTAL BOTANISTS.—It is a popular notion that men of science are interested only in facts, and that they look even at these facts with only intellectual interest, and never with "sentiment." The idea is contradicted by two facts.

Linnæus, the great botanist, whose life was passed in the study of details, was so intensely in love with plants that they excited in him feelings akin to worship. The first time he saw the gorse in bloom on Putney Heath, in England, he fell on his knees and thanked God for having created so beautiful a flower.

Jussieu, a famous French botanist, showed a devotion to a seedling such as could not have been surpassed had the plant been his only son. He was bringing a seedling of the Lebanon cedar from Syria to Marseilles. The ship ran short of water, and the passengers and crew were limited to half a glass of water. Jussieu shared his scant supply of water with his seedling. His self-denial and devotion enabled the plant to reach Paris in safety, where it lived to be a hundred years old and eighty feet high.—*Youth's Companion.*

THE man who devotes his attention to the alleviation of human miseries through the promotion of sanitary science deserves more than a passing notice, and more than the mere financial results of business success. Such a man is Mr. Henry A. Gouge, who as far back as 1881 put forth a volume describing a New System of Ventilation, and of late years has been at the head of the Gouge Heating and Ventilating Company in New York. He is an enthusiast in his department, and a master of his science and the arts which grow therefrom; his work in the State buildings at Trenton and elsewhere testifies to the useful application of his studies.

HE PREACHED WITHOUT NOTES.—"My brethren," said the flustrated preacher, who was making his first attempt to preach without notes, "you have all heard the old saying that whom the gods would destroy they first kill. I mean," he said, as he became conscious that there was something wrong with the quotation, "that when the gods get mad they—er—but, not to dwell on this aspect of the case, I would beseech you to consider," etc.

"THE DRESS IS FINISHED, SO AM I."

A GORGEOUS costume flashed beneath the brilliant lights of a ball-room; "a queen of society is radiant to-night."

The nervous hands of a weak woman have toiled day and night, the weary frame and aching head have known no rest,—for "the dress *must* be finished in time."

To that queen of society and her dress-maker we would say a word. One, through *hot-house culture*, luxury, and excitement, and the other, through the *toil of necessity*, may some day find their ailments a common cause. The Vegetable Compound will enable both to meet the demands of society. *Send stamp for Guide to Health, a beautiful illustrated book..*

LYDIA E. PINKHAM'S Vegetable Compound is the only *Positive Cure and Legitimate Remedy* for the peculiar weaknesses and ailments of women.

It cures the worst forms of Female Complaints, Nervous Prostration, Exhaustion, and strengthens and tones the Stomach. Cures Headache, General Debility, Indigestion, etc., and invigorates the whole system. For the cure of Kidney Complaints of either sex, *the Compound has no rival.*

All Druggists sell it as a *standard article*, or sent by mail, in form of Pills or Lozenges, on receipt of $1.00. LYDIA E. PINKHAM MED. CO., LYNN, MASS.

GUYOT SUSPENDERS.—A few hundred years ago, the methods of keeping a man's trousers in place were exceedingly vexatious. Strings were attached to the coat, and similar ones to the tops of the breeches, and then tied together to unite the most important parts of man's attire. Aristocrats wore ribbons in place of strings, and in the reign of Charles I. a beau was almost a mass of silk ribbons.

The genius who invented the only ever famous Suspenders was Charles Guyot, of Paris, France. He certainly deserves the greatest thanks of the entire masculine world, as he was the first to make a joint Suspender combining comfort and health and insuring to the wearer free and easy motion and automatic play to every action of the body.

The GUYOT SUSPENDERS are justly celebrated throughout the civilized world, and are approved and worn by the highest medical authorities. Every portion is perfect,—the Webbing being of the very best material, the Slides and

Buckles patented, and the Button-Holes do not tear,—being closed by the loom, a patent of Charles Guyot.

Notwithstanding many imitations, the demand for the Genuine Guyots is larger now than it ever has been, and in this country millions of American gentlemen have pronounced the Genuine Guyots the best and most comfortable Suspenders made.

They are known the world over as BRETELLES HYGIÉNIQUES, and can be had in every city in every country.

For nearly fifty years they have maintained their supremacy over all other Suspenders made.

THE light from the Bartholdi statue of Liberty is said to be entirely inadequate in foggy weather, although it is equivalent to fifty-four thousand candles. It is the intention to increase it to one hundred thousand candle power.

"DAN" DAWSON is an iron-merchant of Philadelphia, a bachelor, and a man well known in the clubs of the city. He was born in Lewistown, Pennsylvania, December 17, 1856. His father was also in the iron-business, and Mr. Dawson is at present chairman of the Gray's Ferry Foundry and Boiler Company. He has long been actively interested in athletic sports, having taken up boxing in his youth as a means of fostering and maintaining his health. He is tall and well built, and little looks the poet he is. An article, "With the Gloves—Boxing," together with a poem, "A Fragment," both from his pen, appeared in *Lippincott's Magazine* for last January. All his published poetry has appeared in *Lippincott's* since September, 1887. It is now proposed to issue in the course of the summer or fall a volume of his collected poems, to be entitled "The Seeker in the Marshes, and Other Poems." This will contain about forty selections, among them a fragment of Norse epic. Mr. Dawson has made extensive study of Norse mythology, and has lectured on the subject in Philadelphia.—*Book News.*

PARLIAMENTARY WAGES.—In Germany both houses receive about $2.50 per day. In Austria the pay is $5.00 per day. In Greece the senators get $100 per month, and the deputies $50. In France members of each house receive the same,—$5.00 per day. In Denmark the members receive about $3.75 per day. In Belgium each member of the chamber of representatives gets $85 per month. In Portugal the peers and commoners are paid the same sum, which is about $335 a year. In Spain the members of the Cortes are not paid for their services, but enjoy many advantages and immunities. In Switzerland the members in the national council get $2.50 per day, and the council of state, the lower house, $1.50. In Italy the senators and deputies are not paid at all, but they are allowed travelling expenses and certain other privileges. England is the only country where members of Parliament are not only unpaid, but have no special rights or privileges whatever.

MR. JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY is much in demand nowadays as an after-dinner speaker. His prose halts a little, but his listeners always forgive these defects when the poet concludes his speech, as he almost invariably does, by the recitation of some of his famous stanzas.

ARE YOU SICK? Why not EXPERIENCE the BENEFITS of

HOSTETTER'S STOMACH BITTERS.

It is not only a National but a Universal Remedy, the round World over.

The People of every civilized Nation on Earth attest its great value as a PREVENTIVE of Disease, rectifying so many bodily irregularities, and remedying that most fruitful source of ill health,—WEAKNESS. Dyspepsia, Malaria, Torpidity of the Liver and Bowels, and other signs of General Debility, are soon overcome by this superb Corrective and Tonic. The drain of vital energy is counteracted by the use of the Bitters.

Ask your Druggist for it, and see that you get Hostetter's Stomach Bitters.

Dr. Herbert Hostetter, President; Theo. R. Hostetter, Vice-Pres't; M. L. Myers, Sec'y and Treasurer. The Hostetter Company, Proprietors, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Carl L. Jensen's

CRYSTAL PEPSIN TABLETS are nature's only cure for dyspepsia and indigestion. They prevent dulness after eating, and induce a refreshed feeling of renewed energy. Delivered by mail to any post-office in the United States on receipt of fifty cents in stamps. Samples mailed free. Address the CARL L. JENSEN COMPANY, 400 N. Third Street, Philadelphia, Pa. For sale at all druggists'.

SICKNESS among children, especially infants, is prevalent more or less at all times, but is largely avoided by giving proper nourishment and wholesome food. The most successful and reliable of all is the Gail Borden "Eagle" Brand Condensed Milk. Your grocer and druggist keep it.

"FORTY years ago," said Wilson Barrett, "three little boys advertised a show to be given in the barn belonging to the father of one of them, near Manchester, England. The price of admission was three pins, or six pins for a reserved seat. The play was an adaptation of 'Julius Cæsar,' and the parts of *Cæsar*, *Mark Antony*, and *Brutus* were taken by the three boys, none of whom was over four years of age. A retired actor, then living in Manchester, came to see the children play, and after the performance remarked that he had never seen anything just like it before. He died too soon to see his prophetic words come true, for one of those children was myself, the others were my dear friends Henry Irving and John Toole."

PHYSICIANS, who are generally married and realize the futility of discussion, rarely protest against women's clothing. But recently so conservative a medical journal as the *Lancet* has something to say against the immaculate fit given to women's riding-habits, and to the airy, crownless structures which women call bonnets. Women's riding-habits now so closely follow the configuration of the form that they increase danger by lessening the freedom of movement in case of accident. The tightly-fitting skirt is held to be more dangerous than the loosely-flowing skirt, and the snug-fitting body allows for too little clothing to be in any sense healthful.

WHAT THE DOCTOR SAID.—A friend of Oliver Wendell Holmes, mentioned by the *Boston Budget*, once wrote a book for children, and the good doctor agreed to read the manuscript for her. When it was returned she found no erasure or marginal note until, nearly at the end of the story, she came to a single line in the Autocrat's fine handwriting. It was placed against a passage upon which she had rather prided herself, a description of the picnic feast of children in a grove. It was this: "Don't let those children eat pickles."

HERE is a funny incident that occurred in the street recently. It was where the motor cars pass, and as a gentleman alighted, the conductor told him to look out for the other car. The passenger did not understand him. He turned around and asked, "What did you say?" Just then the other motor struck him and knocked him about five feet toward the curbstone on the opposite side of the street from where he wanted to go. As he got up and rubbed the bruised spots, he was heard to mutter, "I wonder what that fool said."

THE SUNFLOWER.—In 1842 a Russian farmer named Bokareff conceived the idea of extracting oil from the seed of the sunflower. His neighbors told him it was a visionary idea and that he would have his labor for his pains. He persevered, however, and from that humble beginning the industry has expanded to enormous proportions. To-day more than seven million acres of land in Russia are devoted to the cultivation of the sunflower. The area devoted to the crop has nearly doubled in five years. Two kinds of sunflowers are grown, one with small seeds, which are crushed for oil, and the other with large seeds, that are consumed by the common people in enormous quantities, very much as people eat peanuts in the United States.

MAX O'RELL says that every one, except kings and the prime ministers of a few great powers, likes to be interviewed; and he considers it a compliment to be asked to give a newspaper his ideas.

CALIFORNIA.—California is the most attractive and delightful section of the United States, if not of the world, and its many beautiful resorts will be crowded with the best families of the East during the entire winter. It offers to the investor the best open opportunity for safe and large returns from its fruit-lands. It offers the kindest climate in the world to the feeble and debilitated; and it is reached in the most comfortable manner over the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fé Railroad. Pullman Vestibule Sleeping-Cars leave Chicago by this line every day in the year, and go, without change or transfer, through to San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego. This is a feature not offered by any other line.

Write to John J. Byrne, 621 Rialto Building, Chicago, Ill., if you desire any further information as to the country and the accommodations for reaching it.

DON'T TOBACCO-SPIT YOUR LIFE AWAY, is the startling, truthful title of a little book just received, telling all about *Notobac, the wonderful, harmless, economical, guaranteed cure for the tobacco habit in every form.* Tobacco-users who want to quit and can't, by mentioning LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE can get the book mailed free. Address THE STERLING REMEDY CO., Box 779, Indiana Mineral Springs, Ind.

LIFE on the West African coast is everywhere horrible, says the *Saturday Review*. During the heavy rains, in beautiful Bathurst or in Sierra Leone, where nature revels in all the freshness of rich luxuriance, the reeking damp permeates everything, and everything which is not secured in soldered cases will be mildewed in twenty-four hours. When the country is being dried in the blinding sun-blaze, exhalations are drawn up from the fat, black vegetable mould, and the fevers and agues take visible shapes in the ghost-like vapors that go floating about after sundown. If you shut the windows you are stifled; if you open them the fever-fiend drops in with the snakes, bats, and mosquitoes. But, undoubtedly, the terrors of life on that coast culminate in that vast delta of the Niger which lies to the eastward of Lagos. Steamers run up the infernal river for some few hundred miles; but the greater part of the western delta has never yet been surveyed. It is not worth surveying. It is sparsely inhabited by savage races who, like all the Niger tribes, are notoriously cannibals, and fanatical worshippers of the most degrading fetiches. Human sacrifices are a universal institution. Elsewhere, however, on the Brass, the Bonny, and the Old Calabar Rivers, the ubiquitous trader has set down his foot. The whole of the country, for leagues in all directions, is swamp, intersected by sluggish stream or stagnant creek. Even the amphibious negro cannot live altogether among the alligators in odoriferous slime. But wherever there are a few roods of solid mud on a river-bank, there he has run up groups of hovels and made clearings for pigsties and provision-grounds. Opposite some of the bigger of these villages, dignified in treaties by the name of towns, the traders live in their floating hulks. They may and must be bored to death, but they have no inducement to go ashore. There is no sport to be had in the impervious bush, although it swarms with ferocious carnivora and venomous creeping things. Their business communications with the bumptious native potentates, who are their purveyors and best customers, are generally strained and disagreeable. And, having been seasoned by a succession of agues and fevers, their mental and bodily energy is at the lowest ebb. Their only active amusement in any case is wasting powder on the alligators, or shooting snipe, curlew, etc. When they land on the islands to pick up their game, they are as likely as not to be swallowed in quicksands, or rather in thick mud. They dare not even bathe in the river, not only on account of the alligators, but because the inky waters give a loathsome skin disease. Taken internally, even when boiled and filtered, they are found to produce dysentery, goitre, dropsy, and, above all, an incurable elephantiasis. Involuntary siestas help to pass the day; but these are apt to induce sleepless nights, when the only sounds that come to the ear and the throbbing brain are the plash of the water on the sides of the hulk, the scream of the hyena, or the wail of the night-bird. It need scarcely be said that the food is disgusting and insufficient, unless the men condemned to the hulks fall back upon tinned meats. It is almost inevitable that they should betake themselves to steady drinking, and, as their salaries are limited, they are driven to indulge in fresh and fiery trade-rum. So that before being stitched up in a blanket and dropped over the side, or consigned to an unconsecrated grave in the jungle, there is at the least the possibility of relieving the monotony of low fevers with what the Americans call "snakes in the boots" and attacks of delirium tremens.

VOLTAIRE did not believe in the post as a medium of communication for lovers. He claimed that the only advantage of the post was that a woman could let her lover know what she was not doing.

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"Treouts? Nop; mud-turtil."

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THE wise man's sense,—reticence.

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When fortune is outrageous;
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And good may grow contagious.

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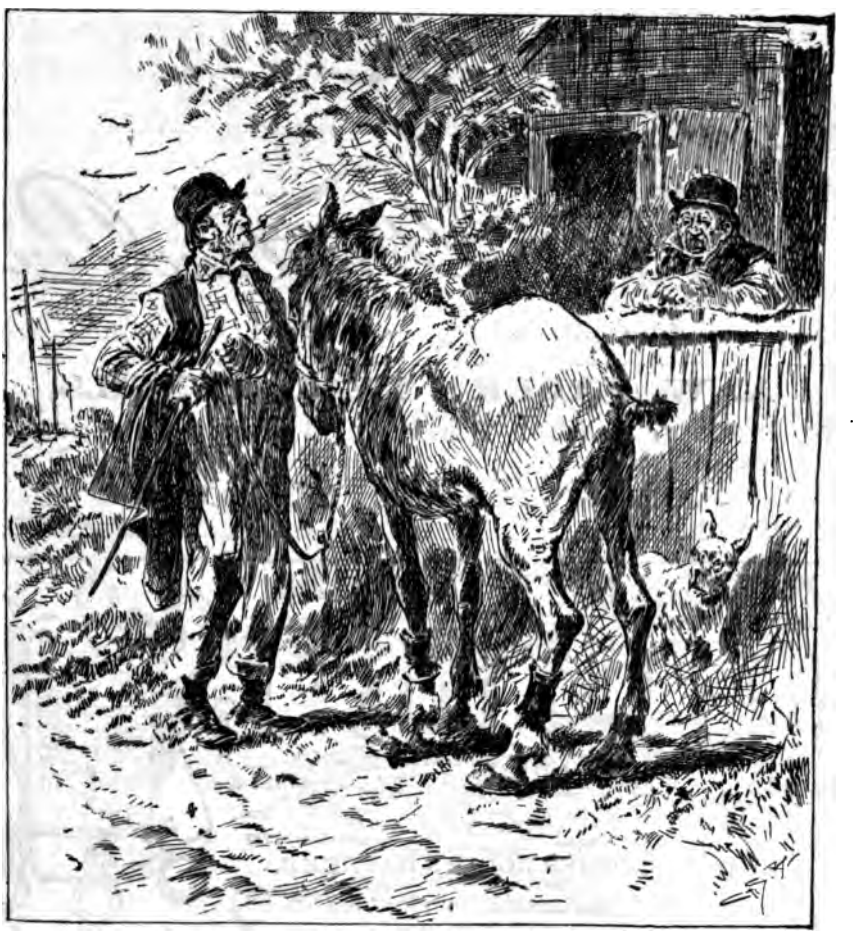

A PEDIGREE.

"It's a great baste he's been in his day, Feeney; an' it's a foine pedigray he has."

"Pfwhere?"

"Behindt 'im, av cdorse."

"Sorra, an' it will be av small use to 'im pwhin the floy saison sets in."

To tell the truth without disguise
Is neither politic nor wise.
The "naked truth," wherever met,
Wears still some shred of etiquette.

OIL may be a serious thing, but the housewife makes light of it.

YOU can't complain when friends have told
A secret that you couldn't hold.